

THE BOOK OF THE LABOUR PARTY

ITS HISTORY, GROWTH
POLICY, AND LEADERS

EDITED BY
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IN THREE VOLUMES. ILLUSTRATED



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CONTENTS

VOL. III

SECTION—FINANCIAL POLICY (continued)

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
THE POOR LAW	3
By C. M. LLOYD, M.A.	

CHAPTER II

LABOUR AND THE DRINK PROBLEM	19
• By J. J. MALLON, M.A.	

CHAPTER III

LABOUR AND THE LAW	30
By ARTHUR HENDERSON, JUNR., B.A., LL.B.	

SECTION—INTERNATIONAL POLICY

CHAPTER IV

THE INTERNATIONAL MIND	51
By C. DELISLE BURNS, M.A.	

CHAPTER V

THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS	69
By C. DELISLE BURNS, M.A.	

CHAPTER VI

LABOUR AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS	87
By W. W. HENDERSON	

BIOGRAPHIES

JAMES KEIR HARDIE	105
RT. HON. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD, M.P.	118
RT. HON. J. R. CLYNES, P.C., M.P., D.C.L.	142
RT. HON. ARTHUR HENDERSON, M.P.	151

BIOGRAPHIES (continued)

	PAGE.
RT. HON. PHILIP SNOWDEN, M.P.	165
RT. HON. J. H. THOMAS, M.P.	174
RT. HON. TOM SHAW, M.P.	186
RT. HON. SIDNEY WEBB, M.P.	190
RT. HON. JOHN WHEATLEY, M.P.	206
RT. HON. STEPHEN WALSH, M.P.	218
RT. HON. VERNON HARTSHORN, M.P.	221
RT. HON. NOEL BUXTON, M.P.	227
RT. HON. LORD OLIVIER, B.A., LL.D., K.C.M.G., C.B.	232
RT. HON. JOSIAH C. WEDGWOOD, D.S.O., M.P.	241
RT. HON. CHARLES PHILIP TREVELYAN, M.P.	246
RT. HON. F. W. JOWETT	251
RT. HON. F. O. ROBERTS, M.P.	255
MISS MARGARET BONDFIELD	259
MR. HARRY GOSLING, C.H., J.P., M.P., L.C.C.	264
RT. HON. BEN SPOOR, M.P.	268
MR. ROBERT SMILLIE, M.P.	273
MR. WILL THORNE, M.P.	287
RT. HON. JOHN HODGE	294
MR. BEN TILLET	297
THE LATE FRED BRAMLEY	302
MR. ERNEST BEVIN	305
MR. GEORGE LANSBURY, M.P.	309
MR. FRANK HODGES	318
MR. C. T. CRAMP	322
THE LATE E. D. MOREL	326
MISS SUSAN LAWRENCE	330
INDEX	335

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOL. III

THE RT. HON. JOHN R. CLYNES, M.P. . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
KEIR HARDIE AT HOME	<small>FACING PAGE</small> 112
J. RAMSAY MACDONALD, ISHBEL AND MALCOLM, WHEN CHILDREN	128
THE LATE MRS. RAMSAY MACDONALD	140
THE RT. HON. ARTHUR HENDERSON, M.P.	160
THE RT. HON. J. H. THOMAS, M.P.	176
THE RT. HON. JOHN WHEATLEY, M.P.	208
COL. THE RT. HON. J. C. WEDGWOOD, D.S.O., M.P.	240
THE RT. HON. F. O. ROBERTS, M.P.	256
MISS MARGARET BONDFIELD	262
ROBERT SMILLIE, M.P.	272
BEN TILLET	298
C. T. CRAMP	322
MISS SUSAN LAWRENCE	332

SECTION

FINANCIAL POLICY—Continued

CHAPTER I

THE POOR LAW

BY C. M. LLOYD, M.A.

(Head of the Department of Social Science and Administration, London School of Economics; formerly Secretary of the National Committee for the Prevention of Destitution)

Origin of Poor Law—Failure of the System—Royal Commission Findings—The Minority Report—Campaign for Break-up of the Poor Law—Principal Aims—Labour Party Proposals—Ministry of Health and Boards of Guardians—"Poplarism"—Main Lines of Reform—Labour Policy.

THE "New Poor Law," now ninety years old, is on its death-bed. But, like King Charles II, it is an unconscionable time a-dying, and to hasten its demise has long been a part of Labour's policy. In order to understand its rottenness and how it is regarded by the democracy of to-day, it is necessary to glance back for a moment at its origins. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 was no mere tinkering up of the old system. That system, as embodied in the statute of 1601—the famous "43rd of Elizabeth"—was good of its kind and in its day. But it degenerated in course of time, and despite occasional attempts to reform it and adapt it to changing conditions, by the end of the eighteenth century the "Old Poor Law" had become a national scandal. Such workhouses as existed were a farce, while the administration of outdoor relief was a tragedy—an intolerable burden to the ratepayers and a degradation of the poor. There was no question, then, about the need of reform in 1834; it was long overdue. But the remedy which the framers of the "New Poor Law" applied, while it cured one evil, produced another. It was based on the notorious "principles of 1834"—that relief should not be given to able-bodied persons and their dependents except in a well-regulated workhouse, and that the lot of the able-

bodied pauper should be "less eligible" than that of the independent labourer outside.

These principles were, no doubt, well calculated to put an end to the degradation of the poor by the old lax system of doles. But they involved a new form of degradation; for the destitute of all sorts were now regarded as little better than criminals, and subjected to the harshest deterrent methods. The harshness, indeed, of the new Poor Law, as it was administered by the strict Boards of Guardians, was gradually modified. The humaner spirit that prevailed as the century wore on made the paupers' lot a little more tolerable—far more tolerable, in fact, in many cases than the reformers of 1834 would have approved of. It was not in its severity, however, that the only—or even the chief—fault of the system lay. Its chief fault was something more fundamental. It was based on a wrong principle—an unscientific principle. It established a "destitution authority" to deal with destitution in the lump, and to deal with it by keeping it at arm's length, or, when notice had to be taken of it, by giving palliatives, and, as a general rule, utterly inadequate palliatives. What the Poor Law did not do and still does not do—and from its nature cannot do—is to get at the causes of destitution and to prevent its occurrence. The Board of Guardians must wait till the sufferer has sunk far in misery before they can do anything to relieve him. That is the essential vice of the Poor Law, which the Reports of the Royal Commission laid bare in 1909.

This Royal Commission may be taken to have sealed the doom of the Poor Law. The working-class, of course, had never liked the system. Not only its unfortunate victims, but many of those who administered it, were aware of its badness. In 1880 we find a delegate at the Trades Union Congress saying: "He had served as a Guardian for two years and had retired from the position in absolute disgust. The system, supposed to be for the guardianship of the poor, was little less now than a system of grinding down the poor." And again at the Congresses of 1895 and 1896, resolutions were carried which denounced the administration of the Poor Law as "bad in principle and ineffective in its results," and demanded detailed reforms that anticipate some of the recommendations of the Royal Commission. But, despite this general and long-standing discontent, few were prepared for the grossness and wide extent of the scandals that were revealed in 1909. And

fewer still, perhaps, had realised what the Minority Report at last made clear, that the only effective cure was the abolition, and not the patching up, of the system.

Let us summarise very briefly the state of the Poor Law as the Royal Commission found it at the beginning of the twentieth century. In every department there was failure. The "well-regulated workhouse" was a rarity. Here and there a strict Board of Guardians applied the deterrent principle and maintained "Able-bodied Tests"—stoneyards or other methods of dealing with unemployed workmen which were both brutal and uneconomic. But generally there was merely an able-bodied ward, into which all and sundry would be packed to idle away their time and sink ever deeper into demoralisation. As for the vagrants, they were dealt with in Casual Wards on a plan which was cruel to the honest man on the tramp for a job, and useless in the way of reforming wastrels or "workshys." Nor was the position of the non-able-bodied any happier. A great army of children was being brought up in the general workhouses, often mixed with the adult paupers, badly looked after and improperly educated. The sick in many of the infirmaries or sick-wards got wretched treatment, while the state of the feeble-minded, lunatics, imbeciles or idiots was disgraceful. Outdoor relief was as unsatisfactory as indoor. Some Boards of Guardians were fairly generous in their scales of allowances, but more often the doles of relief given were outrageously small. In many parishes it was discovered that a sum of a shilling or eighteen-pence a week was all that was granted to a mother to provide for a child, sometimes with nothing at all for herself. Scotland, which has its own Poor Law, was in certain respects slightly less bad than England and Wales; but it was bad enough, and was open to the same general criticisms.

Such a system, which involved the expenditure year by year of millions of pounds on maintaining hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children in discomfort and shame, deserved, and received, unsparing condemnation. The condemnation fell not so much on the Guardians as on the system itself; for it was recognised that the Guardians' hands were to a large extent tied by the law. The Royal Commission split, however, on the question of the practical steps necessary to remedy the evil. The Majority thought that the Poor Law could be made tolerable by a drastic reform; the Minority—consisting of Mrs. Sidney Webb, the Rev. H. Russell Wake-

field (afterwards Bishop of Birmingham), Mr. George Lansbury, and Mr. Francis Chandler, of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners—demanded its complete abolition. Their recommendations were based not merely on the magnitude of the abuses which they discovered all over the country, but on the conviction that a special Poor Law, with an *ad hoc* authority dealing with all the different classes of destitute persons, was fundamentally wrong. To treat destitution as a peculiar disease—a “moral” disease, as some fantastic philosophers have pretended—is a bad blunder; for it means that you are trying to deal with effects and not with causes. That is the chief reason why the Poor Law has failed.

What other system, then, can succeed where the Poor Law fails? The Minority Commissioners were able to give an answer. Another system has actually grown up, as they pointed out, in competition with the Poor Law, but managed on different and better lines. All the various classes which are dealt with by the Boards of Guardians are also dealt with, in one way or another, by other public bodies. The education, health, lunacy, pension, and unemployment authorities are found to be everywhere in rivalry with the Poor Law authorities. They are often dealing with the same families, and hence arises confusion, overlapping, duplication of administrative machinery, and waste of effort and money. It is ludicrous that the two sets of bodies should continue side by side in this open competition. One of them ought to go. Can there be any doubt as to which we want to keep? The specialised local authorities can, and do, get at the causes of destitution—especially in the case of the children and the sick—and aim at preventing its occurrence. They can perform a really constructive work in society. Their business is to seek out cases that need treatment or assistance. The business of the Guardians, on the other hand, is to keep people off the rates, and only to relieve destitution when it is thrust under their noses. They are, in a word, simply palliators. And, moreover, the local education and health authorities and the rest have none of the odium of the Poor Law attaching to them; they have never imposed on those under their care that mischievous and stupid and undemocratic penalty that we call the “stigma” of pauperism.” The conclusion of the Minority Report, therefore, was that, for the sake both of the poor themselves and of the community, the whole Poor Law system should be swept away, and the care of each class of people—

infants, school-children, sick, feeble-minded, aged, able-bodied—transferred to the appropriate local authority (or national authority, in the case of the able-bodied unemployed).

The publication of the Reports of the Royal Commission made a great stir in the country. The signatories of the Minority Report, knowing the habits both of Governments and of public opinion, were not content to rest on their oars. An organisation (first called the National Committee to Promote the Break-up of the Poor Law, and afterwards the National Committee for the Prevention of Destitution) was immediately set on foot, to spread a knowledge of the facts and of the principles on which reform should be based. This Committee was avowedly a non-party body, but the vast majority of its supporters, as well as the enthusiasm and driving force, came, as was to be expected, from the Labour and Socialist movement. A vigorous propaganda was conducted by means of literature, lectures, and conferences. A typical illustration of the interest aroused was the two-day conference in London on "the Abolition of Destitution and Unemployment" convened in 1910 under the auspices of the I.L.P. Two hundred and sixty-nine delegates attended, representing 142 societies—including the Labour Party, the Trades Union Congress, Local Labour Parties and Trades Councils, Trade Unions, Co-operative Societies, and other working-class organisations. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was in the Chair, supported by Miss Mary MacArthur, Messrs. Sidney Webb, George Lansbury, W. C. Anderson, and many other leaders of the movement. Resolutions supporting the Minority proposals were carried at this conference, as they were at thousands of smaller meetings up and down the land. All Members of Parliament, too, were being pressed to take up the question of Poor Law reform in earnest. Mr. Asquith's Cabinet, of course, was for a "wait-and-see" policy, though a large number of Liberals and some of the Conservatives were professed partisans of the Minority Report. The Labour Party in Parliament, reflecting the general opinion of the Labour Movement in the country, was solidly favourable.

At the Party Conference at Newport in 1910, the following resolution was moved by Mr. George Lansbury and seconded by Mr. J. R. Clynes, M.P., and carried unanimously :

"This Conference endorses the unanimous recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, that the general

mixed workhouses and the existing Boards of Guardians should be abolished, and generally supports the proposals contained in the Minority Report for the break-up of the Poor Law by making :

“(A) The local Health Authority responsible for the searching out of and provision of the necessary treatment for all forms of sickness.

“(B) The local Education Authority responsible for all children of school age needing public provision of maintenance either partially or wholly.

“(C) The Asylums Committee responsible for the charge of the weak-minded and imbeciles.

“(D) The local Pensions Committee responsible for pensioning all the necessitous aged and invalided.

“(E) That grants-in-aid be paid out of national funds for all these services, the grants to be allocated in such a manner as to secure the most efficient and up-to-date service from each authority.

“(F) The placing of all local government services under the full control, not of any nominated or co-opted bodies, but of the directly-elected representatives of the people.”

A practically identical resolution was moved at the Conference in 1911 by Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., and seconded by Mr. George Lansbury, M.P. Mr. Henderson in his speech said that the question “would in all probability be dealt with in the present Parliament, and therefore Labour should speak with no uncertain voice in favour of the recommendations of the Minority of the late Poor Law Commission.” His estimate of what that Parliament would do was unfortunately too hopeful ; but Labour’s voice was certain enough, for the resolution was again carried unanimously. In 1914 the Party introduced a Prevention of Destitution Bill, embodying the recommendations of the Minority Report, which, though it was defeated on Second Reading, found a good deal of backing from all parts of the House. They had also a year earlier brought in a Prevention of Unemployment Bill, in which the principles of the old “Right to Work Bill” were merged. This Prevention of Unemployment Bill, though it was not primarily concerned with the Poor Law, was in one sense a sort of supplement to the Prevention of Destitution Bill, since it aimed at rescuing the able-bodied from the Poor Law and at establishing machinery, under the general control of a

Minister of Labour, for the prevention and relief of unemployment. The Bill was introduced again in 1914.

In the meantime, while the Government resisted the demand for legislation, Mr. John Burns, the President of the Local Government Board, proclaimed that he would do all that was necessary with his own strong right hand—that is to say, he would issue orders from his department instructing the Boards of Guardians to remedy some trifling faults in their administration. He did not admit, of course, that there was anything seriously wrong with the Poor Law system of which he was the Great Panjandrum. As for the proposals of the Minority Commissioners, he regarded them as fantastic. "Revolution by administrative reform" was his motto, he declared, and, in the intervals of making boastful and misleading speeches in defence of the Poor Law, he dabbled with his pinchbeck revolution. When he resigned his office in 1914, he had succeeded in removing a few of the more glaring abuses (notably the retention of the children in the general work-houses). But substantially he left the system as he had found it—still detested by the poor, wastefully run, overlapping with the services of other public authorities, giving doles to palliate the destitution with whose causes it had no concern. The Labour Party, of course, had fought the High Priest of reaction at the Local Government Board to the best of its ability. Its policy, like his, had been consistent, and it was as anxious in 1914 to make a clean sweep of the Poor Law as it had been in 1910.

The War naturally gave Bumble a respite. Poor Law reform had for the time being to be put on the shelf. In the first few months the sudden dislocation of trade caused abnormal distress and drove a number of people to seek parish relief. But soon, with the absorption of men and women into the army and munition-making or other industries, and with the general decrease of destitution, the volume of pauperism fell. The Guardians' main task was now to look after their non-able-bodied classes—the feeble-minded, the sick, the infirm aged, and the orphan children—which, of course, they did no better than formerly. And presently it appeared that there was no intention of making the temporary reprieve permanent. The Representation of the People Act in 1918 removed the disqualification which disfranchised a person who had received parish relief in the previous twelve months. This was a pretty severe blow at the tottering principles of 1834, and it was

generally supposed that the Poor Law's days were now numbered. A few months earlier, indeed, the sentence of the Royal Commission had been confirmed by a Committee, appointed in July 1917 by the Ministry of Reconstruction, "to consider and report upon the steps to be taken to secure the better co-ordination of Public Assistance in England and Wales." Its chairman was Sir Donald Maclean, M.P. (whence its popular title, the "Maclean Committee"), and among its members were Mrs. Sidney Webb and Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., as representatives of Labour. Its Report, issued in December 1917, was unanimous, except for some unimportant reservations by one or two members. It adopts the main principles of the Minority of the Royal Commission, while admitting certain compromises to satisfy the Majority. It should be noted that Lord George Hamilton and Sir Samuel Provis, two of the signatories of the Majority Report, were on the Maclean Committee, and their agreement with Mrs. Sidney Webb was taken by both sides to mark the end of the old feud. And the Maclean Report at once took the place of the Minority Report as the provisional programme of those who were demanding the abolition of the Poor Law.

The following is a summary of its principal recommendations :

(1) Boards of Guardians should be abolished and all their functions transferred to the Councils of Counties, County Boroughs, and Boroughs and Urban Districts with populations over 50,000.

(2) Provision for all the sick and infirm (including the aged requiring institutional care and maternity and infancy) should be made by these authorities under the Public Health Acts suitably extended.

(3) The Ministry of Health should have power, on the application of any Borough with over 10,000 population, or any Urban District with over 20,000, to "direct that such functions as the Ministry may determine" shall be exercised by the Town or Urban District Council instead of by the County Council.

(4) The children should be dealt with by the Local Education Authorities, the mentally deficient by the Lunacy Authorities.

(5) Every County or County Borough (or Borough or Urban District Council with population over 50,000) should set up

(a) A Prevention of Unemployment and Training Committee (on the lines of the Education Committee, and including representatives of employers and Trade Unions). Its functions would be to aim at preventing unemployment as far as possible, by (i) procuring such a rearrangement of the Council's works and services as to regularise the local demand for labour; (ii) facilitating through the Employment Exchanges the finding of situations; (iii) making use of any form of educational training in co-operation as far as possible with the Education Committee; (iv) assisting migration; and (v) creating and administering, whether by itself or in federation with other local authorities, any specialised provision of the kind required by the unemployed.

(b) A Home Assistance Committee (on the lines of the Education Committee, and including persons experienced in the work to be done, and in the first instance, some ex-Poor Law Guardians) to inquire into the economic circumstances of all applicants for public assistance, to supervise them, to administer all relief given in the home, to recover expenses for maintenance, treatment, etc., and to keep a private register of all such applicants and their families and of the assistance given.

(6) County Councils should appoint Committees for Districts or combinations of Districts, to which various functions of the Home Assistance Committee and the Prevention of Unemployment Committee would be delegated.

These District Committees would consist of (a) members of the County Council, (b) Town or District Councillors, (c) persons experienced in the work to be done.

(7) London should have a special scheme, in which the duties would be divided between the L.C.C. and the Metropolitan Borough Councils.

(a) The Metropolitan Borough Councils would appoint Home Assistance Committees, and would also carry out vaccination and registration of births and deaths.

(b) The L.C.C. would exercise the rest of the Functions transferred (through its Public Health, Education, Asylums, and Prevention of Unemployment Committees). It would also appoint a Central Assistance Committee, which would lay down policy and rules of local administration for the Home Assistance Committees in the Boroughs.

(8) Poor Law officials should be transferred to the Local Authorities (provided both they and the Local Authorities agreed) and compensated for any pecuniary loss incurred by the change.

Scotland was not within the reference of the Committee, but it was understood that the Scottish Poor Law should be broken up on the same general principles.

At the Annual Conference of 1918, shortly after the publication of the Maclean Report, the Labour Party reaffirmed its views in the following resolution moved by Mr. Egerton Wake, and carried unanimously :

“ That the Conference notes with satisfaction the decision of the Government both to establish a Ministry of Health and to abolish the whole system and organisation of the Poor Law.

“ It regards the immediate reorganisation in town and country alike of the public provision for the prevention and treatment of disease and the care of the orphans, the infirm, the incapacitated and the aged needing institutional care as an indispensable basis of any sound social reconstruction.

“ It calls for the prompt carrying out of the Government's declared intention of abolishing not merely the Boards of Guardians, but also the hated workhouse and the Poor Law itself, and the merging of the work heretofore done for the destitute as paupers in that performed by the directly elected County, Borough, and District Councils for the citizens as such, without either the stigma of pauperism or the hampering limitations of the Poor Law system.

“ It feels that only in connection with such a reorganisation of the local Health services—urgently required to meet the dangers attendant on demobilisation—can a Ministry of Health be of effective advantage to the nation.”

In 1919 the Labour Party introduced a revised version of its pre-war Prevention of Unemployment Bill. This was repeated in 1920, and again, with further slight revisions, in 1921, 1922, and 1923. This new Bill embodied certain of the principles of the Maclean Report in regard to the able-bodied, and it referred specifically to the transfer to the Minister of Labour of powers or duties hitherto exercised by the Boards of Guardians and the Minister of Health. The second reading in 1923 was only defeated by a majority of 24. The Government, of course, which had declared itself favourable in

principle to the Maclean Report, continually found excuses for doing nothing. Legislation for the reform of the Poor Law was promised "at the earliest possible moment"; but all Mr. Lloyd George's moments, until he fell from power in 1922, were occupied in grander adventures!

Meanwhile, with the slump that followed the post-war boom, a new phase in Poor Law administration began. At the end of 1920 unemployment was on the increase, and in 1921 the figures were rising by leaps and bounds. Trade-Union funds, and any savings that the workers might have had, were soon exhausted. The Government had no plans for dealing with the crisis, save the Unemployment Insurance scheme, and the inadequacy of this, with its iniquitous "gap" system, was soon apparent. The unemployed, reduced to desperation, were driven back on the Poor Law. In December 1920 the total number of persons in receipt of poor relief in England and Wales was 568,000. In September 1921 it was 1,243,042, and in October 1,494,000—both these figures being swollen by "gap" distress. In 1922 the position became still worse. In April another "gap" period brought the total to 1,668,348. In May, with the engineers' lock-out, it was 1,725,452, and in June, with the "gap" again, 1,769,387—the record of 1,837,980 (or one in twenty-one of the whole population a pauper!) being reached on 17th June. Thereafter there was a gradual decrease, but in June 1923 the figure was still as high as 1,270,097. In many places the position was appalling. No less than thirty Poor Law Unions had one in ten, and Poplar and several others one in five, of their population reduced to pauperism. It was a disastrous state of affairs for the Guardians and the Poor Law officials who had to administer this relief, and for the ratepayers who had to pay for it. In some cases, indeed, the ratepayers could not meet the immediate strain; the Guardians had to borrow and thus saddle the rates with a heavy future burden. The Government, although it was clearly the duty of the State to provide for this exceptional distress, merely pottered with the problem, and tried to cover up their failure by encouraging recourse to the Poor Law, so as to throw as much as possible of the cost from the taxes on to the rates.

This situation had two important effects. The first was that the inadequacy of the Poor Law was again brought into prominence. It was not a question, of course, of blaming the Guardians; in the circumstances they were the only

agency which could prevent the starvation of masses of the people. But the Poor Law was never designed for such a task as had been thrust on it, and it is not equipped for it. Sir Alfred Mond, indeed, talked smugly of the Guardians as the "sheet-anchor of the nation," and some of the defenders of the Poor Law have tried to persuade us that this crisis proves the folly of the "abolition" policy. But the Labour Movement—and, indeed, the country as a whole—will refuse to be misled by such specious arguments. Of course, there must be some public organisation in existence to deal with exceptional distress from unemployment; but it is ludicrous to pretend that that organisation must be the present Poor Law system or anything like it.

The second result was the battle royal between the Poplar Guardians and the Ministry of Health. It is not necessary to go into all the complicated details of this controversy; but since it is "Poplarism," as it is called, that has led up to the final crisis in the fate of the Poor Law, the main points must be briefly recalled. The Poplar policy of humanising the Poor Law and attempting to give more or less adequate relief was not a new one; it was the logical development of the opposition started many years before against what Mr. Lansbury has called the "oakum-picking, stone-breaking, bone-crushing ideas" of the old school. But in 1920 the Poplar Union, like a good many others, was overwhelmed by the flood of applicants for relief. The Guardians found themselves between the devil and the deep sea—the growing mass of the unemployed and the poverty-stricken ratepayers. They made efforts to get the sympathy of the Minister of Health, so that the burden of the rates in the poorer districts might be mitigated. But these efforts were in vain, and the Poplar Borough Council adopted the desperate course of refusing to collect the rates for the London County Council and certain other central services. Legal proceedings were taken; the Judge ordered the collection of the rates; the Borough Council ignored the order, and twenty-nine of its members were imprisoned for contempt of court. Their imprisonment put the Government in an uncomfortable and ridiculous position, and forced it to concede some of the legislation that Poplar had been demanding. The Local Authorities (Financial Provisions) Act, 1921, considerably extended the existing provision—hitherto very small—for the equalisation of poor rates in London; in particular it laid down that the cost of

outdoor relief should be charged on the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund within the limits of a certain scale to be fixed by the Minister of Health. The Minister issued his scale (the "Mond Scale") in January 1922. This, of course, did not satisfy the Poplar Guardians, who were now importuning him for a loan to tide them over the current half-year, in view of the awkward financial position in which they found themselves at the moment. The Minister countered by holding a special inquiry into the circumstances of Poplar. Mr. Cooper, the Commissioner who conducted it, reported very unfavourably on the Poplar Board, averring amongst other things that with proper administration they could save £100,000 a year.

The Poplar Guardians hotly contested Mr. Cooper's conclusions and his methods, and the suggestion that they ought to "save" £100,000 they regarded as preposterous. They still pressed for their loan, and insisted on their right to give relief at their discretion. The Minister, therefore, played his ace of trumps by issuing a peremptory Order applicable to the Poplar Union alone, though there were other Unions ~~where~~ relief was being paid on a higher scale than that of Poplar. This Order, which came into force on 1st July, 1922, provided that no relief given in Poplar to an able-bodied person, or any member of his family, in excess of the "Mond Scale" should be legal. It could only be legalised if specially sanctioned by the Minister in each case. The Poplar Guardians took up the position that this Order, as issued by the Minister, was illegal, and they continued to contravene it, thus laying themselves open to surcharge. After a few months a further complication was introduced by the passing of the Local Authorities (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1923. This Act altered the situation in certain respects which we need not go into here. It also produced a very pretty legal tangle; for, while apparently it automatically revoked the Regulations of 1922 (the "Mond Scale"), according to the official view it left the special Poplar Order of 1922 untouched, though this Order and those Regulations were closely bound up together. And the most absurd result was that the Poplar Guardians were forbidden, under the Order of 1922, to pay as much in out-relief as they, like other Boards, were empowered to pay by the Act of 1923.

This confused state of affairs continued till February 1924, when Mr. Wheatley rescinded the Poplar Order. Meanwhile the Poplar Guardians had continued to be surcharged, and

successive Ministers of Health—Sir Alfred Mond, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, and Sir W. Joynson Hicks—had continued to ignore the problem of the surcharges—that is to say, they were afraid to enforce them by taking the drastic step of clapping the Guardians into jail. When the Labour Government came into office, the new Minister of Health very properly made up his mind to end this long-drawn-out farce. He announced that he was not going to enforce surcharges that the Auditor might make in respect of certain “illegal” relief that had been given before the date (8th February) on which he rescinded the Poplar Order. Immediately a storm burst. Opponents of the Government cried out that Mr. Wheatley was the apostle of “Poplarism,” that he had given his sanction to law-breaking, that he was inviting all the Guardians in the country to plunge into orgies of extravagance with the rate-payers’ money. He was, of course, doing nothing of the sort, and the explanations that were given from the Treasury Bench, and by the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords, convinced all reasonable people that the Liberal and Tory critics had got hold of the wrong end of the stick. As Mr. Wheatley said, all that he was doing was promising “to remit surcharges that might be made under the Mond Order in Poplar, but which would not be made in any other area in the country—but leaving Poplar subject to surcharge in respect of any excess or extravagance that would be surcharged against any other Board of Guardians. . . . I have not ‘surrendered’ to Poplar; I do not intend to surrender to Poplar. I have rescued my department from a state of degradation. I have put my department in a position in which it can and will enforce the law.”

Such was the end of the struggle. During the three years that it lasted, there may, no doubt, have been a division of opinion in the Labour Movement regarding some of the tactics employed by Poplar. But there was universal sympathy with the main principle for which Poplar was contending—namely, that, so long as a Board of Guardians was saddled with the responsibility of giving relief, it was its right and its duty to make that relief as adequate as possible. The really important result of the whole affair, however, was not that the Poplar Guardians had succeeded in breaking the law with more or less impunity, as their opponents alleged; it was that they demonstrated once more the folly and mischief of the Poor Law system. When the storm had cleared the

air, the policy advocated consistently by Labour for fourteen years stood out as the plain and common-sense solution of the problem. Mr. Wheatley, at the conclusion of his speech in Parliament on 26th February, declared: "I am willing and anxious, as is the Government of which I am a member, to reform the Poor Law and particularly the Poor Law system of London, at the earliest possible moment; and in doing so, I will see, if I am in office, that the rights of the poor and the principles of popular government are protected in the measure submitted to the House." That declaration, endorsed later in the debate by the Prime Minister, was the voice of Labour prepared to act.

About the main lines that legislation must take there can be no doubt. The Labour Party, as we have seen, has never wavered in its support of the principles of the Minority Report and the Maclean Report. The Poor Law must be broken up, and the care of the children, the sick, the aged, the feeble-minded, the able-bodied, transferred to the proper specialised authorities. The process of taking large sections of all those classes out of the Poor Law has already gone far, and sound administration and humanity alike demand that it should be completed. The arguments for the retention of a separate "destitution authority" are grotesque. The attempt is made to justify such a body by asserting that every case of destitution is a sign of *moral* failure. But how many of us believe such nonsense? And how can it be pretended that a sick man or woman, or a child of school age, will be more efficiently treated by the "omnibus" Board of Guardians than by the Health or Education Committee of the Town Council? The Board of Guardians, we are solemnly told, is a more democratic body than a Town Council. How is it so? The members of both are popularly elected. Why should a Guardian be supposed to "understand the needs of the people" and a Borough Councillor to be ignorant of them?

Again, both alike necessarily conduct a great part of their business through officials of one sort or another. Yet the ludicrous charge is made that those who desire the break-up of the Poor Law aim at substituting for it the reign of bureaucracy. Grant, if you like, that Medical Officers of Health, the nurses in a Municipal Hospital, the various officers of an Education Committee, the managers of the Employment Exchanges are "bureaucrats." But what, then, are Poor Law doctors and Infirmary nurses, Workhouse Masters and

Relieving Officers? The argument will not bear looking into. The fact seems to be that what the champions of the Poor Law are really after is not so much efficiency or democracy, as cheapness. They think, in short, that the Poor Law machinery is the most likely machinery for keeping the poor off the rates, or expending as little as possible on any who must be relieved. It is a bad calculation, for poverty that is unrelieved or inadequately relieved does not mean a saving in the long-run. Indeed, it generally does not mean a saving even in the short-run; since what is saved on the poor rates will have to be paid out of other rates or taxes. The Labour Party, in any case, will not subscribe to this doctrine of cheapness at the expense of the working-class. The Labour Party is alive to the importance of public economy; but it believes that the truest economy consists in spending adequately on the treatment of those who are in need, and, above all, on the prevention of destitution.

The principles of Labour's policy, then, are clear enough. This does not imply, however, that the Party is committed to every detail of the Maclean Report. There are certain doubtful points in it, which, as Mr. MacDonald has said, require careful examination. It is possible that the Maclean proposals for dealing with unemployment will need modification. It is, no doubt, desirable that we should have local bodies co-operating closely and carefully with a national authority in dealing with unemployment. But it is by no means clear that the county offers a satisfactory area for the purpose. Nor is it clear that the "Prevention of Unemployment and Training Committee," with the particular functions imposed on it in the Maclean Report, is exactly the administrative body that is wanted in every locality. The "Home Assistance Committee" is also open to some criticism. Naturally the local authorities giving assistance in money or kind must ensure proper co-ordination in their work. But it will be necessary to guard carefully against an "unspecialised" committee of this sort interfering unduly with the business of the "specialised" committees, and also against its carrying out its powers of "supervision of the family" on the lines beloved of the Charity Organisation Society. These, however, are matters of detail which do not affect the fundamental principles of the Maclean Report. When the Labour Party buries Bumble, it may be trusted to see that, in Mr. Wheatley's words, "the rights of the poor and the principles of popular government are protected in the measure submitted to the House."

CHAPTER II

LABOUR AND THE DRINK PROBLEM

BY J. J. MALLON, M.A.

*(Warden of Toynbee Hall ; Hon. Secretary of Labour Campaign
for Public Ownership and Control of Drink Trade)*

Origin of the Licensing Laws—Effect of Trade Conditions on Drunkenness—Social Consequences—National Prohibition—Gradual Reform—State Purchase—Improving the Public-house—The Labour Inquiry.

EFFORTS to control the drink traffic and thereby to diminish the social and economic evils caused by the excessive consumption of intoxicating liquor have been made in this country for a period of over four centuries. The retail sale of liquor has been the subject of statutory regulation in England since 1495, and has been under a system of licence since 1551. England has had a much longer experience of liquor legislation than any other country. The necessity for legislation was forced upon the attention of statesmen and reformers by the growth of crime and disorder associated with the public-houses. This connection between drink and social disorder can be quite clearly recognised in the preamble to the first licensing Act, that of 1551 :

For as much as intolerable hurts and troubles to the commonwealth of this realm doth daily grow and increase through such abuses and disorders as are had and used in common ale-house and other places called tippling houses . . .

With the introduction of spirits the evils of intemperance were intensified, and in the early years of the eighteenth century began the attempt to deal with the drink trade not only as the source of crime and disorder but as the cause of frightful degradation, moral, mental, and physical, in the individual. There has been, as a consequence of the terrible ravages caused by the drinking of distilled liquors, a very close connection

between temperance reform and medical science. So soon as medical thought began to concern itself with the question of health as involving more than the treatment of disease, the problem of intemperance assumed a new aspect. The scientist came to the aid of the moralist and the statesman. It was no longer simply a question of individual habits producing undesirable social consequences, but of a social custom threatening physical and moral ruin to a large number of the human race. Temperance reformers, therefore, lay as much emphasis upon the scientific view of the effects of alcohol upon the human organism as they do upon the social and economic arguments against the drink trade.

The social and economic effects of intemperance are indeed too conspicuous to be denied. As one authority, Sir James Crichton, M.D., by no means a fanatical temperance reformer, has said in describing the "misdeeds of alcohol":

It is obviously responsible alone or in conjunction with other malign agencies for much poverty, misery, and sorrow, for matrimonial wreckage and the neglect, starvation, and ill-usage of children, for dirt and disease of body and mind, for crime and disorder, for self-contempt and suicide.

This indictment stands against the drink trade even when all the improvements made in recent years in limiting excessive drinking and controlling its attendant evils are admitted. The case for reform does not depend upon any exaggeration of the facts. We can congratulate ourselves as a nation upon the marked reduction that has taken place in the consumption of alcoholic liquors and upon the success that has attended the efforts to bring the liquor traffic under control. Drunkenness has diminished. The temptations to excessive drinking have been reduced. Statistics of consumption show that in the last fifty years the average annual consumption of intoxicants, measured by the amount of the national drink bill, has fallen considerably. The *per capita* consumption of beer fell in the last half-century from more than 33 gallons per annum to less than 18 gallons, whilst the consumption of spirits in the same period was correspondingly reduced.

The most marked reduction took place during the war, and although the improvement then recorded has not been altogether maintained, conditions in this respect are materially better to-day than they were in pre-war years. Drinking facilities have been severely limited, both in regard to the number of public-houses, and as to the hours of sale. Whereas

in 1732 there was one public-house for every 50 people, the proportion now is one for about 536 people. The average annual decrease in the number of "on-licences" in the decade 1895-1904 in England and Wales was 386; the experience of nearly two decades since the passing of the Act of 1904 has been that the average decrease is at the rate of about 1,000 a year. On the other hand, the number of clubs where drink can be obtained has notably increased, a fact which has given rise to serious misgivings among temperance reformers as indicating an alternative channel for the drink trade. Since 1904 the number of clubs has increased by 4,775. On balance, however, the effect of the measures taken to deal with public-houses has been to restrict the opportunities of obtaining drink. Convictions for drunkenness are to-day considerably less than half what they were before the War. In 1913 the total for England and Wales was 188,877, and in 1923, with a much greater population, no more than 77,094. There was a very substantial diminution in the number of convictions for drunkenness during the War, falling as low as 29,075 in 1918 in England and Wales. In 1920, at the peak of the post-war trade boom, the total for the same area rose to 95,763; but it fell again in the years of the trade slump to less than half the pre-war total. Figures relating to convictions for drunkenness in the Greater London area tell the same tale and within limits can be taken as indicating a definite improvement in social habits.

Nevertheless, the drink trade does still represent a serious national problem. Whilst it is true that intemperance is decreasing, it must be borne in mind that the improvement is not continuous and is not evenly distributed over the whole population. Drinking habits appear to fluctuate with the state of trade. The fall in the amount of drink consumed per head of the population, as a statistical fact, may signify an increase in the number of abstainers, or a reduction in the amount consumed by moderate drinkers, and an actual increase in drunkenness among those of intemperate habits. In other words, the problem of the excessive drinker may be growing worse. That trade conditions affect the consumption of drink is beyond question. Drunkenness increases when trade is good and diminishes when it is bad. As we have seen, at the height of the post-war trade boom in 1920, the convictions for drunkenness were materially in excess of those for the following three years in which wages struck down in a very steep curve. There is a relationship of cause and effect

between the heavy wage reductions of 1921-22-23, and the decrease in the national drink bill, as well as the diminution in the number of convictions for drunkenness.

With the recovery of trade there is reason to apprehend an increase in drinking, and unless reforms are instituted the increase may even approximate to the pre-war level. A general tendency towards sobriety may be discernible, but the movement is extremely slow, and meanwhile the nation pays heavily for its failure to deal with the problem. Drink is a costly indulgence, and the nation cannot afford it. It is estimated that the national drink bill, which means the expenditure on alcoholic drinks for consumption, still exceeds £300,000,000 : the estimated figure for 1923 was £307,000,000, as compared with £330,000,000 in the previous year. This colossal sum is not far short of the amount that has to be raised every year to meet the charges of the National Debt. It does not, of course, represent the total cost to the community of the national habit of drinking : no small proportion of the 60-odd millions spent annually for police and prisons, lunatic asylums and poor relief, must be considered as an expenditure that is rendered necessary by alcoholic excess.

And from the point of view of the national economy there are other grave losses to be reckoned. It has been established beyond dispute that scientifically considered excessive indulgence in alcoholic liquors is injurious to health and impairs mental and physical efficiency. Contrary to the common opinion, the effect of alcohol is not to stimulate but to depress the functions of the human organism. Alcohol is a narcotic drug. Many people, witnessing the heightened, boisterous, and even violent activity of mind and body which generally marks the earlier phases of intoxication, are naturally inclined to think that alcohol has a stimulating and exciting effect. But the action of alcohol is primarily to weaken the control normally exercised by the higher centres. The sense of freedom and well-being which accompanies the initial stages of intoxication, the rising excitement of the drinker, are really due to a lowering of the standard of self-control, to a weakening of the inhibitions imposed by the mind and will upon the expression of thoughts and feelings. The drug successively suspends the hierarchy of functions of the brain, in the order from above downward¹ : that is to say, the higher faculties

¹ *Alcohol : Its Action upon the Human Organism.* Report of the Medical Research Council, 2nd ed. 1924.

controlling the conduct of the individual are the first to relax their guardianship and lastly the physical controls go. Under the influence of the drug the drinker sinks in the scale of civilised behaviour, losing progressively the management first of the moral, then of the intellectual, and finally of the physical activities of his being. The saying "In vino veritas" expresses the nature of the drug's action. The tight-lipped discretion with which a man will govern the utterance of his thoughts, especially if he has anything to conceal, cannot be maintained from a quite early stage of intoxication. Plato recognised this by enacting that only the old men in the Republic should have the privilege of drinking on festal occasions. The young men were required to remain sober in order to profit by the garrulous outpouring of the old men's thoughts under the influence of wine when they cast caution to the winds and talked more freely than they would do in sober and responsible moods.

Many experiments have been made by scientific observers to show the extent of the disturbance of the higher mental functions caused by graduated doses of alcohol which leave the subject short of actual intoxication. These experiments have proved that self-criticism, the highest and latest developed of the intellectual faculties, is blunted almost from the first dose. At a very early stage the subject displays a certain amount of satisfaction with himself and his performances which his behaviour, in the eyes of the beholder, does not justify. Then follows a stage in which the subject begins to show a certain clumsiness in action and lack of precision in speech. Following on this comes the stage at which the subject becomes more unrestrained in the expression of his emotions, noisier, more emphatic, more quarrelsome or more affectionate, merrier or more morose, gayer or more despondent: the controls are slipping, and from then on the subject rapidly loses all powers of self-management until he sinks at length inert and unresponsive into a heavy sleep, which lasts until the alcohol in his system has been oxidised.

The scientific indictment of alcohol rests upon its action as a narcotic drug in rendering the drinker less capable of behaving with the proper degree of self-conscious restraint, responsibility, and judgment required in civilised society. In the degree to which the drinker cannot be depended upon to manage himself so as to avoid being a nuisance or a danger to others he is obviously less fit for civilised life. On the prin-

ciple of "Safety First" his presence in our midst adds another incalculable and unreliable element to the risks and difficulties of modern existence. Leaving out of account the moral question, and even ignoring other social consequences of drunkenness, the squalor, the misery, the suffering, and the crime which it produces, it is evident that the smooth and efficient working of our social economic and industrial mechanism is impaired by it.

That the habitual use of alcohol by the worker, whether in the belief that it is a substitute for food or in the belief that it gives a fillip to energy, is physiologically unsound, can be taken as proved; and that in the course of establishing this conclusion evidence has been accumulated to show that mental and physical efficiency is impaired in the worker, with directly adverse results in regard to output, risks of accident, liability to sickness and disease, and a lowering of industrial standards cannot seriously be disputed. Statistics show that the industrial accident risk due to chronic alcoholism is about three times as high as among men in general, including ordinary drinkers. It has also been proved by statistical inquiry that the effects of acute alcoholism are shown, if not in the greater frequency, then certainly in the increasing severity of accidents among drinkers as compared with the general experience. The effects of "convivial drinking" so-called (Sunday and evening drinking) are also visible statistically in the higher risk of Monday accidents, though it should be borne in mind that figures showing a greater incidence of accidents on Monday or in the early hours of the night-shift are not wholly to be explained by reference to the alcohol factor: other factors, including what is called "practice-efficiency," labour-turn-over (changes of occupation usually take effect over the weekend), and fatigue, all have an influence upon the weekly accident cycle.

Labour's attitude to the drink question is, then, determined by these several lines of argument: (1) that drunkenness is the cause of much misery, crime, and social disorder; (2) that the expenditure on drink is grossly in excess of what the nation can afford; (3) that the physiological effects of excessive indulgence in alcohol are such as to reduce the value and efficiency of the individual as a citizen and as a worker. Many Labour people will decline to go the length of saying that under no conditions is the use of alcoholic beverages permissible. It is not intended here to assert that the temperate

consumption of alcoholic beverages is under all circumstances entirely harmful. In our modern industrial civilisation there may be possible occasions when the strain of existence may be legitimately and profitably relaxed, and the physiological effects of alcohol described above may conceivably afford a satisfaction and relief not to be easily obtained in any other way. With certain precautions, such as never to take alcohol in a concentrated form and without food, and always to avoid the habit of taking so much alcohol at such regular intervals that a certain amount of the drug is always present in the body, a limited and temperate consumption of alcoholic liquors may not be physiologically injurious to the majority of normal adults. So much can be admitted, on scientific testimony, without any weakening of the case for drastic curtailment of the drink trade. There is not in the Labour Movement at any rate any very emphatic demand for absolute prohibition of alcoholic beverages. But there is a decided opinion in the Labour Movement in favour of temperance reform, though differences exist as to the precise nature of the reform. Within the Labour Movement advocates are to be found for practically all the different methods of dealing with the drink trade proposed by reformers outside. Labour's temperance policy cannot, therefore, be stated with quite the same precision and emphasis as that of the United Temperance Council of the Churches or the United Kingdom Alliance.

In the Labour Movement there are broadly three different lines of approach to a solution of the drink problem. One group holds that the solution lies in *national prohibition*, meaning thereby the adoption of law, as in the United States, which will render illegal the manufacture, distribution, transport, and sale of alcoholic beverages. Another view is taken by the advocates of *gradual reform*, who take the view that the evil can best be dealt with by bringing the whole traffic in drink under some form of public control and eliminating the private vested interests which make profits out of the degradation and demoralisation of the people. One group among these reformers adopts the policy of Local Veto, which may be described as a geographically limited system of prohibition: it is proposed, as in the Liquor Traffic Local Veto (England and Wales) Bill of 1922, to give the people in each area the opportunity of voting on the simple issue whether or not the licensed sale of liquor shall be permitted in their midst; and if a majority of the people in such area decide

for "No Licence" the wholesale and retail trade must be shut down and the sale, delivery, or purchase of liquor by clubs, co-operative associations, companies, or individuals is to be forbidden within such area. Another group adopts the principle of Local Option, which provides for a still more gradual process of reform. Under Local Option the people in each area are to be given the opportunity of deciding by popular vote whether conditions are to continue unchanged, whether licences are to be reduced by a prescribed number, or are to be extinguished altogether; other "options" may be included, such as the question whether the traffic, if it is decided to allow it to continue, shall be carried on under private or public control. Still another group attaches most importance to the elimination of private interests in the drink trade and proposes a scheme of *State Purchase*. Under public ownership it is contended that public-houses can be transformed into centres of social recreation and places of refreshment where people need not drink intoxicants unless they want to. The Carlisle experiment can be cited as an illustration of the changes that can be introduced and the reforms that may follow the adoption of this plan whereby the incentive of private gain is removed from those responsible for the conduct of the trade. Private profit is held to be the main cause of abuses by encouraging publicans, managers, and distillers and brewers to increase the sale of drink. Under the influence of the profiteering motive public-houses become mere drinking dens and the people are incited by advertisement and solicitation of every kind to drink more than they should. Public ownership stands, therefore, somewhat apart from the other temperance reforms in that it does not raise the question whether drink is good or bad or whether prohibition is better than Local Option; but simply, whether if there are to be public-houses, they should be owned by the people or the private interests.

The conflict of opinion within the Labour Movement between the advocates of State Purchase and Local Option as a method of dealing with the drink evil is reflected in the declarations of annual conferences defining party policy. At the party conference in 1905 a resolution was adopted in favour of "the public ownership and control" of the drink trade by Municipalisation. In the following year the conference declared that "the time has arrived when the workers of the nation should demand that a law be enacted giving the in-

habitants of every locality the right to veto any application for either the renewal of existing licences or the granting of new ones, seeing that public-houses are generally situated in thickly-populated working-class districts." In 1907 still another policy was formulated, and as this held the field as the official declaration of the party's attitude towards the problem of temperance reform until quite recently the text had better be given in full :

That in the opinion of this Conference any measure of Temperance Reform should confer upon localities full and unfettered power for dealing with the licensing question in accordance with local opinion. By this means localities should be enabled to—

- (a) Prohibit the sale of liquor within their boundaries ;
- (b) Reduce the number of licences and regulate the conditions under which they may be held ; and
- (c) If a locality decides that licences are to be granted, to determine whether such licences shall be under private or any form of public control.

This resolution, adopted at the Belfast Conference in 1907, was restated in substantially the same form in the official summary of party policy issued in 1918 under the title of *Labour and the New Social Order*. At the Scarborough Conference in 1920, however, the question was raised afresh. The advocates of State Purchase put forward a resolution in these terms :

This Conference, believing that private capitalism in the drink trade has been guilty of profiteering, promoting excessive drinking, and corrupting political life ; and noting that the principles of the experiment carried out by the State in the Carlisle area have been endorsed by the Carlisle Trades Council and Labour Party and by a representative Trade Union and Labour Delegation which visited Carlisle, calls upon the Government in its forthcoming legislation to acquire the liquor interests in England and Wales at not more than the pre-war values.

To this resolution an amendment was moved declaring that "the total prohibition of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors as beverages will be of great advantage to the workers of this country." The amendment was lost by 2,603,000 votes to 472,000 ; the resolution was rejected by a much narrower margin of votes—1,672,000 to 1,352,000. These figures show how evenly the Labour Movement is divided

as between the advocates of State purchase and other methods of reform. But the Conference decided by 2,000,000 votes to 623,000 to reaffirm its original policy of Local Option, and there the matter remained until at the Edinburgh Conference of 1922 it was decided in view of the importance and complexity of the question of the liquor trade and the necessity of formulating a full and comprehensive Labour Party policy thereon, to instruct the party executive to conduct an inquiry into the question, taking into account the various declarations of policy made by previous conferences.

The National Executive thereupon appointed a special committee, consisting of Mr. Sidney Webb, M.P. (chairman), Dr. Ethel Bentham, Miss Susan Lawrence, Mr. Morgan Jones, M.P., Mr. R. J. Davies, M.P., Mr. F. O. Roberts, M.P., and Mr. W. H. Hutchinson, with Mr. J. S. Middleton as secretary. Ten meetings were held by this committee and representatives of every organisation concerned with the question of reform, as well as representatives of "the Trade," were given the opportunity of stating their views. The considered report of the committee pronounced against the practicability of any sudden change by Act of Parliament in the habits and customs of the people. It also presented a balanced and lucid summary of the various reform proposals, dealing too with the results of the Carlisle experiment and the position of the working-men's clubs. Finally, however, the committee reached the conclusion that its best course was to recommend reaffirmation of the policy of Local Option as stated in *Labour and the New Social Order*, which, though in accordance with that of the Belfast Conference, materially varies in its terms :

The Labour Party sees the key to Temperance Reform in taking the entire manufacture and retailing of alcoholic drink out of the hands of those who find profit in promoting the utmost possible consumption. This is essentially a case in which the people, as a whole, must assert its right to full and unfettered power for dealing with the licensing question in accordance with local option. For this purpose, in conjunction with any expropriation of private interests, localities should have conferred upon them facilities, at their own option :

(a) To prohibit the sale of alcoholic drink within their boundaries ;

(b) To reduce the number of places of sale and regulate the conditions of sale ; and

(c) To determine, within the fundamental conditions prescribed

by statute, the manner in which the public places of refreshment and social intercourse in their own district shall be organised and controlled.

There, as far as party policy goes, the question rests ; but it may be added that if the Labour Government had continued in office it was its intention to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole problem of the drink traffic and to examine the various proposals made for reform, with the view of making recommendations as to legislation. What kind of measure the Government would have produced it is impossible to say : but from the foregoing explanation of Labour policy it is possible to infer that it would probably have been a measure combining State Purchase with Local Option.

CHAPTER III

LABOUR AND THE LAW

BY ARTHUR HENDERSON, JUN., B.A., LL.B.

(Barrister-at-Law ; formerly Member of Parliament for Cardiff, South)

Ministry of Justice Suggested—Position of the Lord Chancellor—Home Secretary's Functions—The Judiciary—Appointment of Judges—Justices of the Peace—Remedies for Existing Evils—Problems of Punishment—The Prison System—Punishment and Deterrent Methods—Poor Prisoners' Defence Act—Preventive Detention—Prison Reform.

PERHAPS the most interesting and most far-reaching proposal which has been made with regard to legal administration is the suggested establishment of a Ministry of Justice in this country. The advocates of this innovation point to the fact that such a department of Government is to be found working successfully in all the principal European countries. In order to appreciate the significance of the proposal, it is necessary to understand clearly the peculiar position of the Lord Chancellor in the British Constitution. Whilst foreign observers have professed to see in England a complete "separation of powers" which they regard as ideal, we find in fact that the Lord Chancellor is a member in turn of the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary. He is the principal legal adviser of the Crown and the head of the Judiciary, by prescription the Speaker of the House of Lords, by virtue of his office a Privy Councillor and a Member of the Cabinet. The magnitude and variety of the duties with which the Lord Chancellor is charged are such that it is not surprising to find that successive holders of this office have testified that it is beyond the strength of any one man to perform the work that ought to be done.

In his capacity as Speaker of the House of Lords, the Chancellor has to attend on the Woolsack when the House

is engaged in its ordinary sittings as a legislative body. As Chief Law Officer his attendance at meetings of the Cabinet is generally indispensable ; he has a special responsibility for all Bills and is appealed to on points of law or interpretation. As President of the Supreme Appellate Court of Great Britain, i.e. the House of Lords in its judicial capacity, he sits on four days of the week during the legal year, and very often his judgments have to be put into written form. The Lord Chancellor also sits, whenever he is able, in the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as President of that Court ; he is, in fact, responsible for the constitution of the Court and the appointment to be Privy Councillors of those who are not Peers and who are considered members of the Committee. In the intervals between these sittings the Chancellor is a Judge of the Chancery Division of the High Court and a Member of the Court of Appeal ; he is also President of the Supreme Court. We shall also find that it is upon the recommendation of the Lord Chancellor that all the Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the King. He has in addition certain active duties in relation to the work of the Courts, e.g. he is Chairman of the Rule Committee of the Supreme Court and appoints its members other than ex-officio members. The entire procedure of the High Court is regulated by these rules, which are therefore of vital importance to all litigants. The Lord Chancellor is responsible for the County-Court system of the country ; all the County-Court Judges are appointed and are removable only by him. The administrative work connected therewith has truly been said to be a gigantic task. Nor is this an exhaustive list of the Chancellor's duties, for no mention has been made of his duties with regard to infants, idiots, and lunatics. We shall refer later to that important department of his work, viz. the appointment of Justices of the Peace throughout England and Wales (the appointment of Stipendiary Magistrates and Records alone being relegated to the Home Secretary).

In view of the above enumeration of the Lord Chancellor's duties, it is not surprising that the Machinery of Government Committee appointed by the Minister of Reconstruction in 1917 should conclude that "the functions of the Lord Chancellor and his Department seem clearly to admit of a redistribution which should have as its objects the relief of the Lord Chancellor from responsibilities which are at present too heavy to leave it possible for him to discharge

them effectively ; and the further concentration in one Department of some of the administrative functions connected with the operation of the Courts, and in the hands of one Minister of some of the patronage now widely dispersed, and sometimes entrusted to high officers of State not responsible to Parliament.”¹

But before considering this suggestion in more detail, it is as well to refer to the duties of the Home Secretary. He is His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State, and his duties bring him into more immediate and personal relations with the Crown than do those of his colleagues ; he is the proper medium of communication between the King and his subjects. The Home Secretary is responsible for the preservation of the King's peace. He exercises a certain amount of control over the Police Forces throughout England and Wales, and the Metropolitan Police Force is completely under his control. The Secretary of State for Home Affairs advises the King in the exercise of the prerogative of mercy—a discretionary power to remit or modify punishment for a public offence. He also deals with Naturalisation and Nationality and exercises wide powers under the Aliens Acts, giving or withholding certificates as he thinks most conducive to the public good. Prisons and jails, lunatic asylums and reformatory schools, are within his jurisdiction, and he also supervises the operation of the Factory and Workshops Acts, Workmen's Compensation Acts, and other industrial legislation.

It will readily be seen that a considerable proportion of the above-mentioned duties of the Home Secretary is connected with the administration of justice and kindred topics. That consideration, taken in conjunction with the facts relating to the office of the Lord Chancellor, has led to the suggestion that the Home Secretary should become the Minister of Justice. It is proposed that he should be relieved of functions pertaining to other national services, such as those concerned with health and production in workshops and factories ; these would be transferred to appropriate Ministries, while he would be the Minister generally charged with the administration of services connected with Justice, subject to the exceptions made in favour of the Lord Chancellor's Department. For it is contemplated that the Lord Chancellor should retain his ancient status, his position as

¹ Report of the Machinery of Government Committee, Cd. 9230, cap. x, par. 29.

President of the Supreme Tribunals and as a great Officer of State with high responsibility. The proposal is to apportion the functions of the Central Government in relation to Justice broadly between the Lord Chancellor's Department and the Department of the Secretary of State for Home Affairs, so as to relieve the Lord Chancellor of the extreme pressure now falling upon him. With the same object in view it is suggested that the Lord Chancellor should cease to act as Speaker of the House of Lords or of a "Reconstituted Second Chamber." In view of the objections raised to this proposal it is interesting to observe that the Committee on the Machinery of Government, who think that a strong case is made out for the appointment of a Minister of Justice, say¹: "His work would be in close and frequent relation with that of the Minister of Justice, and goodwill and forbearance would be essential for the prevention of friction. But these two great Ministers ought to be able to work closely together, and we see no reason why this should be difficult. Their staffs should be in frequent consultation."

Those who oppose this change assert that such consultation is freely practised under present conditions; the heads of the Lord Chancellor's Department and the Home Office are in daily communication and contact. This co-operation and co-ordination, it is asserted, go far to minimise any overlapping that may tend to arise by reason of concurrent jurisdiction. In short, it is confidently asserted that the suggested advantages to be gained from the proposed changes are largely illusory, while the proposal is open to very grave objections. There is, in the first place, an objection to interfering with a system which is the outcome of a continuous growth; the Lord Chancellor is the oldest in standing of the Ministers of the Crown. An even more serious and weighty argument is that based on the fear lest the creation of a Ministry of Justice should ultimately entail the subordination of the Judiciary to the Executive. The preservation of the complete independence of the Judiciary is rightly regarded as an absolute condition of English freedom. The advantage of the present system arises from the fact that in this country, as has already been indicated, both High-Court and County-Court Judges are appointed by the head of the Judiciary, and not by the head of an executive department. Those appointed are

¹ *Ibid.*, cap. x, par. 41.

invariably barristers of high standing and with great experience of the administration of justice in the Courts, all of whom are jealous of the independence of their calling. Our Judges, therefore, may be said to be impervious to any influence on the part of the Executive Authority, and in fact a tradition of judicial independence has grown up during the past centuries which is zealously guarded and when necessary enforced by the Judges, even though the results of their deliberations may be in direct conflict with the views of the Executive. It is pointed out that on the Continent Judges tend to regard themselves as State officials constituting a judicial hierarchy; promotion takes place through the various grades, as in the case of our own Civil Service. However well this may fit in with the theory that it is the duty of the Judge to convict on the representation of the State, it is felt that it has no relation to conditions prevailing in this country. The British people look to our Judges to safeguard their liberties against the encroachments of the Executive. If, therefore, the independence of the Judges is even remotely threatened by the suggested creation of a Ministry of Justice, the proposal will have but poor prospect of adoption in this country.

The High Court consists of three Divisions containing unequal numbers of Judges. The Chancery Division consists of the Lord Chancellor, who presides, and five Judges; while the King's Bench Division has fifteen Judges, presided over by the Lord Chief Justice of England. The Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Division has but two Judges, the President and another.

All these Judges, save the Lord Chancellor, are appointed by letters patent under the Great Seal on the advice of the Chancellor. They are required to take the judicial oath and thereafter hold office during good behaviour. It is to be noted, however, that they may be dismissed only on an address from both Houses of Parliament. This absolute independence and immunity from outside influence of the Judges is regarded as the corner-stone of the Constitution and vital to the preservation of freedom. The "rule of law" is, as Dicey pointed out, the most characteristic feature of the political institutions of England—the Government has no arbitrary power, every man is subject to the ordinary law of the realm, and even our most precious constitutional liberties are based ultimately on "judicial decisions determining the rights of private persons in particular cases before the Courts,"

e.g. our right to freedom of discussion is very largely based on decisions given in cases connected with the notorious Wilkes.

These considerations show how fundamental is the principle of the independence of the Judges, and make it abundantly clear that any projected departmental reforms must provide a reliable safeguard against any infringement of this principle.

Mention must also be made of the "circuit system," whereby justice is brought to the very door of the citizen. The principle of circuits was introduced as early as the year 1173; the "itinerant justices" went as the King's representatives, and their court was everywhere *Curia Regis*, though their authority was defined by the words of a temporary commission. The King continues to this day to issue commissions for taking the Assize, and the Commissioner acting under such commission is "deemed to constitute a court of the High Court of Justice." In recent years, however, it has happened that the amount of work involved at certain of the smaller towns visited by the King's Judges has been very small, and the suggestion has been made in the interests of economy that the power should be placed in the hands of the Lord Chief Justice of waiving the necessity for holding an Assize at such towns on any particular occasion. The suggestion is combated vigorously by those who attach very high value to the progress of the King's representative throughout the length and breadth of the land; it serves to bring home to the people, as no other method can, the reality of the King's justice and its availability to all the King's subjects.

Even more closely related to the everyday life of the ordinary citizen are the Justices of the Peace, who play a great part in the administration of justice in this country. The origin of the Justice of the Peace is to be found in a proclamation of Richard I in the year 1195; by the middle of the fourteenth century they had become a permanent body endowed on occasion with the duty of Judges. It is interesting to note that at least a certain number were chosen by the "freeholders in full county court before the Sheriff"; but in 1344 it was definitely enacted that the Keepers of the Peace were to be appointed by the King's Commission. Apart from the requirement that they should be resident in their several counties, there seems to have been at first no condition of appointment except that they should be men "of the best reputation and the most worthy men in the county." Later it was prescribed by a Statute of Henry VI that no Justice

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should be put on the Commission if he had not lands to the value of £20 per annum ; three centuries later this was raised to £100 in land or houses, except in the case of certain individuals exempted by exalted birth or legal training. In the words of a learned historian : " Thus was gradually consolidated that monopoly of the upper class in administration, that local rule of the landed gentry, which foreigners rather than native writers have noted as so characteristic of the modern English constitution."¹ During all this period, of course, the Justices were performing all that work of administration which now falls to the County Councils and other administrative bodies created during the last century. It was not until 1906 that the property qualification was finally abolished. During their term of office the mayors of municipal boroughs and the chairmen of county and of district councils are ex-officio Justices of the Peace ; all others are appointed by a special Commission under the Great Seal. The Sessions of Justices of the Peace are of two kinds : (1) General Sessions and General Quarter Sessions, and (2) Petty Sessions and Special Sessions ; and though the Justices are Justices of the Peace for the whole county, by custom they attend only the Petty Sessions of the Division to which they are attached. There are 750 Petty Sessional Divisions of counties and 251 boroughs having separate Commissions ; in twenty other areas there are Stipendiary Magistrates, whilst in fourteen Metropolitan Police Court Districts there are twenty-five Police Magistrates, all of whom are appointed by the Home Secretary. The primary duty of the Justice is to keep the peace, and Justices sitting as a Court of Summary Jurisdiction have been invested by Statute with the power of dealing summarily with a very large number of criminal offences. In addition, they have semi-administrative, semi-judicial duties in such matters as (*inter alia*) the licensing of places for the sale of intoxicating liquor, affiliation orders, separation and protection orders ; in short, their duties bring them into very close contact with the lives of the great mass of the citizens of this country.

The method of selection of Justices of the Peace is therefore a matter of the gravest moment and is vital to the well-being of the State. Recommendations of persons to be appointed Justices of the Peace for counties are usually made to the Lord Chancellor by the Lord Lieutenant of the County, but it is

¹ Medley, *English Constitutional History*, p. 424.

important to note that this is entirely a matter of custom; the Lord Lieutenant has no absolute right to recommend persons for appointment or to be the *sole* channel through which recommendations should be made. In fact, protests have from time to time been made against the manner in which a certain number of Lords Lieutenant have interpreted their duty. It is of course obvious that the Lord Lieutenant cannot be personally acquainted with every possible candidate for the Bench, and he is bound, therefore, to seek advice and information from others. The methods of different Lords Lieutenant in obtaining this information have varied widely, and in some cases it is asserted that they have relied entirely on the advice of one or two particular persons who are influenced by social or political predilections. Thus it was said that in 1905, for example, there was a great preponderance on most of the county benches of Justices of one political complexion. It was this condition of affairs which led to the appointment in 1909 of a Royal Commission on the Selection of Justices of the Peace. This Commission, reporting in 1910, found that all political parties sought to take advantage of every available opportunity to demand and secure the appointment of Justices, and that the balance of party strength was often a primary consideration, to the exclusion of any inquiry as to the magisterial qualifications of the persons nominated. In this way, the Commissioners thought, "their character for impartiality may be wrongly enough imperilled, and that respect without which the due and effective administration of the law is unattainable, is injuriously affected."¹

Turning to the suggested remedies for existing evils, the Commissioners declare that the substitutes for such political opinion and influences should be found in the fitness of the intended Justices, and such fitness should be constituted by their moral and personal character, their general ability, business habits, independence of judgment, and common sense. They record their opinion, formed after full inquiry, that appointments influenced by considerations of political opinions and services are highly detrimental to the public interest, and tend to lower the authority of the magisterial benches in the country. In view of current criticism, to which we shall presently refer, it is important to recall the fact that they were strongly of opinion that "the area of selection should

¹ Report of the Royal Commission on the Selection of Justices of the Peace Cd. 5250, p. 9.

be wide, and the choice comprehensive, so that the Bench may include *men of all social classes and of all shades of creed and political opinion.*"

They conclude that the appointment of Justices of the Peace should continue to be made by the Crown, and that the Lord Chancellor is the most suitable Minister to be entrusted with the duty of advising upon the selection to be made. In this connection they quote the words of Lord Loreburn: "If it be decided that the Lord Chancellor should remain the final authority upon this subject, I think it cannot be too strongly impressed upon the public at large that this duty is closely connected with the administration of justice, and for that reason they ought to support him in administering it in a judicial spirit and not as appertaining to his administrative position as a member of the Government of the day." Their most important recommendation was, however, that in every county one or more Justices' Committees, consisting of not more than five members, should be appointed by the Lord Chancellor, and that in constituting these Committees regard should be had to the importance of giving them a representative character, so as to secure the expression on them of different views and current of public opinion. Whilst leaving the power of recommendation with the Lord Lieutenant, it was recommended that he should receive suggestions from the Committee and transmit them to the Lord Chancellor. There follows a strong condemnation by the majority of the Commissioners of *interference* by Parliamentary members and candidates.

Since 1911 these recommendations have been largely adopted and Advisory Committees have been formed in every county or county borough, but the voice of criticism has not been entirely stilled. It is still felt that the prejudices and prepossessions of the Lord Lieutenant are too much in evidence in the constitution of the Advisory Committee, and that nominations are in fact restricted to the social class to which he belongs; working-class magistrates are in many districts few and far between.

As a somewhat desperate remedy for this grievance, the suggestion has been put forward that the ancient practice of electing Justices should be reverted to, but it is generally felt that the method of election is not well adapted to the ends to be attained, i.e. the appointment of the most "worthy men" in the county. On the other hand, it may be that

the advice of such elected and responsible representatives of the people as the chairmen of the various councils within the county should be more freely sought by the Lord Chancellor direct, in addition to that obtained from the Lord Lieutenant. It is conceded on all hands that the mere suspicion of undue influence affecting the appointment of Justices is inimical to the smooth working of the judicial machinery in this country. The position of Justice of the Peace is rightly considered to be one of the highest honour, and it is in the public interest that working men and women, with a first-hand knowledge of the conditions of life among their class, should be appointed to the county as well as the borough benches.

We pass now to consider the problems of punishment. The saying of Sir Henry Maine, "All theories on the subject of punishment have more or less broken down; we are at sea as to first principles," remains true to this day. Nevertheless, there is no surer index of a country's civilisation than the manner in which it treats those who have offended against its laws. In considering the English prison system it is well to remember that it is of comparatively recent growth; it really commences with the Prison Act of 1778. Before that date there had been jails and bridewells and places of detention, but the conception of institutions for the express purpose of punishment was absent. Almost from its inception we hear of movements for the reform of the prison system; in 1791, mainly through the efforts of John Howard, there was passed what may be described as the first general Prisons Act, applying the principles of the projected national *penitentiary* to all places of confinement in England and Wales. It should be remembered also that not until 1877, after transportation of prisoners had become impracticable, did prison administration become centralised in England. By the Prisons Act of 1877 the ownership of all the local prisons was vested in the Secretary of State for Home Affairs, and the general superintendence was committed to a body of Commissioners appointed by the Home Secretary to assist him in the work and to be responsible to him for their administration. Uniformity and severity became the keynote of the administration, which was conducted with a view merely to the maximum economy and efficiency. Military influence became supreme in the prisons and the effect of the régime on the prisoners was entirely lost sight of. In the words of the 1894 Committee, which made a keen and minute inquiry into the prin-

ciples and practice of the Prison Commissioners: "The great and, as we consider, the proved danger of this highly centralised system has been and is that, while much attention has been given to organisation, finance, order, health of the prisoners, and prison statistics, the prisoners have been treated too much as a hopeless or worthless element of the community, and the moral as well as the legal responsibilities of the Prison Authorities have been held to cease when they pass outside the prison gates." Moreover, it was plain that the military régime had achieved no greater success in deterrence than in reformation; recidivism was as great as ever. Unfortunately, it is only very slowly and incompletely that reforms can be effected. Before discussing the reforms already attempted and those further reforms which are overdue, it is well to consider the object to be aimed at.

In the first place, the general attitude adopted by those responsible for administering the prison system is indicated in the words of the Prison Commissioners' Report: "The purpose for which prisons exist is the due punishment of fully responsible persons." Punishment involves at least three factors—retribution, deterrence, and reformation. What is the order of precedence among these three factors? In their Annual Report for 1913 the Prison Commissioners insist that retribution is the primary purpose of imprisonment:

"If by 'retributory' is meant not the vulgar and exploded instinct of vengeance or personal revenge, but the determination of the human consciousness that the system of rights shall be maintained, and that he who offends against it shall be punished, and that the punishment shall be of such a nature as to deter him and others from anti-social acts; if by 'reformatory' is meant the main accepted axiom of modern penology that a prisoner has reversionary rights of humanity, and that these must be respected consistently with the due execution of the law, and that no effort must be spared to restore that man to society as a better and a wiser man and a good citizen—any inversion of these factors of punishment would be fatal; but among loose thinkers and loose writers the impression seems to be gaining ground that this historic order of the factors of punishment should be inverted, and that the object of punishment shall be altogether reformatory, as little as possible deterrent, and not at all retributory."¹

¹ Prison Commissioners' Report, 1912-13, pp. 22-8.

In other words, the basic aim of imprisonment is not to improve the prisoner, but to prevent people from committing crime; it is in pursuance of this aim that cellular confinement involving strict separation, onerous tasks, silence, isolation, and the other well-known characteristic features of imprisonment are inflicted upon the offender. They visit the offender with retribution and are intended to deter the prisoner himself and others from violation of the law. Though we are told that the "reversionary rights of humanity" in the prisoner must be respected, it is felt that the retributory aspects of punishment satisfies a rightful feeling of vengeance if not of vindictiveness on the part of the community. It is further claimed that some of these punishments are reformatory at least in a negative way, as, for example, the enforcement of silence may be said to prevent the moral contamination of the less corrupt by the more corrupt. But on the whole it is true to say that the extent of the reformatory influences has been largely narrowed down to a comparatively small section of prisoners; indeed it is sometimes suggested that the responsibility for reformation rests on the after-care agencies.

The first step in reform, therefore, is to reconsider this order of precedence; even if the retributory element in punishment cannot be entirely eliminated, the reformatory influences should be placed first in our treatment of offenders. At the present time, whatever may be said against the prisons, it cannot be shown that they were ever designed to reform those sent to them; and if they fail to do so, they do not therefore fail in the purpose for which they were built, which is to detain and punish criminals. In the words of Dr. Devon: "In so far as punishment is retributive, it is foolish and indefensible, harming not only those on whom it is inflicted, but those who inflict it. If as individuals we are not justified in fostering a spirit of revenge, we are as little entitled to encourage such a spirit in our corporate capacity."¹

Similarly, punishment does not deter the great mass of citizens from committing crimes; the real deterrent is social opinion, and where that does not operate, punishment is no substitute. Moreover, it so happens that scientific research affords ample justification for a more rational treatment of the criminal. The Italian criminologist, Professor Lombroso, popularised a pseudo-scientific view that there is a criminal type—"men and women beset with definite morbid and

¹ Dr. Devon, *The Criminal and the Community*, p. 178.

physical stigmata"; to-day hardly any competent criminologist maintains that view. A complete refutation of the theory is contained in *The English Convict*, written by Dr. Goring, who examined three thousand convicts at various prisons. The result of his researches, including measurement of heads, may be expressed thus: that whereas it can be deduced from comparisons of groups of measurements at what University undergraduates reside, no confident assertion of any kind can be made with regard to a group of felons. There are no characteristics peculiar to criminals which are not shared by all people. To quote further: "The physical and mental constitution of both criminal and law-abiding persons of the same age, stature, class, and intelligence are identical." This is a fact of the greatest possible significance and encouragement to those who adhere to the reformatory conception of punishment.

Hence arises the demand for the individualisation of punishment. "Justice demands that the old formula of imprisonment with or without hard labour indiscriminately applied shall no longer be held to satisfy all her claims." This truth was excellently put by the Chairman of the Prison Commissioners in an address to the Washington Prison Congress: "In all prison systems of the world that will be the best where the arrangements admit of the greatest individual attention being given to each individual case. . . . I mean that each man convicted of crime is to be regarded as an individual, as a separate entity or morality, who, by the application of influences, of discipline, labour, education, moral and religious, backed up on discharge by a well-organised system of patronage, is capable of reinstatement in civic life."¹ As it is, however, the dominant characteristic of the prison routine is the suppression of personality; the criminal is as nearly as possible dehumanised. The evidence is clear that self-respect is destroyed and self-expression prevented in every phase of prison existence. And this condition of our prisons cannot be remedied whilst the commitments of criminals of all classes, accidental, habitual, and weak-minded, for all manner of offences—serious, petty, mere breaches of regulations—and for varying terms, remain at or about the present figure. "Ordinary detention in prison, and especially where the population is large as in the prisons of the metropolis, cannot, even with the greatest care and the best possible arrangements, allow of that specialisation and individual

¹ Report of 1910 (Washington) International Prison Congress, pp. 73-4.

attention which is essential if a real impression is to be made on the younger criminals," said Sir E. Ruggles-Brise. The statement is still more true if the field of reformatory treatment be extended to all criminals.

In this connection we are brought face to face with the truly astounding fact that nearly a third of the prison population are there through failing to pay a fine; in 1913, before the Criminal Justice Administration Act, 1914, provided for the granting of more time to pay fines, the proportion was a half. Unfortunately, the later provision is not made fully operative, and all those with knowledge of the facts agree that far more opportunities for the payment of fines should be provided.

By the Children Act, 1908, the imprisonment of children and young persons under sixteen years of age has become practically impossible. In the preceding year, 1907, the Probation of Offenders Act was passed, which empowered the Courts, despite the fact that an offence had been committed, to discharge the prisoners either absolutely or conditionally. In exercising this power the Court may have regard to the "character, antecedents, age, health, or mental condition of the person charged, or to the trivial nature of the offence, or to the extenuating circumstances under which the offence was committed." This is an invaluable power, because the conditions of the discharge may place the offender under the supervision of a probation officer or other person, and determine his place of residence, or stipulate for his abstention from intoxicating liquor, or contain any other matter as the Court may consider necessary for preventing a repetition of the offence. Under these wide discretionary powers a magistrate need never send a first, or indeed any, offender to prison. Unhappily this Act has not been operated as widely as it should, though statistics show that only about 6 per cent. of those placed on probation reappear for sentence. In this way hundreds are saved from the disgrace of imprisonment with distinct gain to society; and beyond doubt the case has been made out for the extension of the principle of the Act and the organisation of probation on large national lines. The formality of the Probation Order, the regular visits and reports of the officer, and the knowledge that the supervision is that of a duly appointed officer of the Court, is most helpful to those who are in some peril of entering upon a criminal career.

Mention must be made here of another long-delayed reform which would materially diminish the number of commitments from the Summary Courts. This consists of the extension of the Poor Prisoners' Defence Act, 1903, which only applies to prisoners tried at a Court of Assize or Court of Quarter Sessions. Very many prisoners are helpless when they come up for trial in the Police Courts and are quite unable to make a statement or disclose a defence which may be perfectly valid ; in the rush of what has become routine duty the magistrate may and does fail to appreciate the true nature of the case, and the alleged offender too often starts on a prison career with all its dread possibilities. The suggestion put forward is that the probation officer attached to the Court should scrutinise the list of cases daily and make provision for safeguarding the interests of all accused persons who seem to have a bona-fide defence ; he would of course pay particular regard to the cases of those appearing for the first time. It is further suggested that to facilitate such a provision there should be a rota of solicitors practising in that Court who would in turn give their services freely to poor prisoners, in addition to the services rendered by counsel at the Assize Courts. Persons so charged would thus have the opportunity of having their interests safeguarded in the Police Courts by trained lawyers. Various representative bodies have already endorsed the suggestion, and it is to be hoped that such a scheme will be in operation in the immediate future..

To return to the question of the treatment or punishment of the prisoner sentenced to imprisonment, attention must be called to what is the most hopeful indication of a new policy in our criminal system and prison administration. By the Prevention of Crime Act, 1908, it was made lawful for the Court to send to a Borstal Institution any offender over sixteen and under twenty-one years of age who has been convicted on indictment of an offence for which he is liable to be sentenced to penal servitude or imprisonment or summarily convicted of an offence of similar gravity *and* who is of criminal habits or tendencies or the associate of persons of bad character. It is particularly to be noted that the Borstal System is designed to deal with the young hooligan advanced in crime, perhaps with many previous convictions, who appears to be inevitably doomed to a life of habitual crime.

No account of the system can be attempted here, but its leading feature is that it aims at checking the criminal tendency

by the *individualisation* of the prisoner, mentally, morally, and physically. The object is avowedly reformatory, which marks a welcome advance upon the principles on which the prison system as a whole is based. The minimum period of detention in a Borstal Institution is two years, the maximum three years. But a system of release on licence is adopted whereby male offenders may be released after six months and female after three months. A defect is that good physique is a qualification for such treatment, and, further, certain extreme cases are excluded. Of those who go through the training, however, only 27 per cent. are reconvicted. Everything depends on the personal influence of the superintending staff of tutors, who have the rank and status of Deputy Governors. "It is, in the concrete, a simple system of firm and exact discipline, tempered by an ascending scale of rewards and privileges which depend upon industry, conduct, and special merit."¹ An attempt is being made to introduce a modified Borstal System in *all* prisons, though actually the difficulties in the way of introducing the right atmosphere into an ordinary prison during a short sentence are well-nigh insurmountable. Perhaps, indeed, the importance of the Borstal Institutions lies not so much in their success, which is considerable, but in the promise they give of a more rational treatment of prisoners and the hope of a consequent extension of the work of redemption and reformation.

The same Statute of 1908 instituted the practice of preventive detention in our prison system. A person sentenced to penal servitude (i.e. three years' imprisonment at least) may be sentenced to a period of preventive detention following that of penal servitude, provided that a jury has found on evidence :

(a) That since attaining the age of sixteen years he has at least three times previously been convicted of crime, and that he is leading persistently a dishonest or criminal life ; or

(b) That he has already been found to be an habitual criminal and has been sentenced to preventive detention ; and provided also

(c) That the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions has been obtained to this charge being made ; and

(d) That due notice has been given to the Court and to the offender specifying the grounds upon which the charge is founded.

¹ Ruggles-Brise, *The English Prison System*, p. 98.

The maximum period of the sentence is ten years, the minimum five years, and persons being detained must be employed on such work as may be best fitted to make them able and willing to earn an honest livelihood on discharge. The system of release on licence granted by the Secretary of State operates. The only Preventive Detention Prison is situated at Camp Hill in the Isle of Wight. The nature of the imprisonment may be gathered from the following terse account :¹

“ The steps in the progress of a well-conducted prisoner towards the maximum privileges obtainable may be summed up as follows. After six months he has meals in association ; after twelve months he may enjoy associated evening recreations ; eighteen months brings him an allotment with its healthy interests and the solid profits of its produce ; and two years transfers him to the Special Grade, with its additional letters and visits, and increased tobacco ration, the provision of a daily newspaper (instead of a weekly), permission to take part in organised discussions and music, and other similar privileges. The last and greatest of all the privileges is admission to the ‘ Parole Lines.’ ”

The “ Parole Lines ” are tenements outside the prison walls. It is calculated that preventive detention succeeds in reinstating twice or three times as many of its difficult and almost hopeless cases as does penal servitude. Preventive detention has utterly falsified the prevalent idea of the hopeless recidivism of the habitual criminal or incorrigible enemy of society ; it is but natural, therefore, that projects for the extension of this method to all those serving sentences of penal servitude should be formulated, and Advisory Committees to recommend convicts for preventive detention treatment have been formed.

Closely connected with this reform is the question of the indeterminate sentence, compromised in the case of the habitual criminal by fixing the maximum period of ten years. With the new spirit that is pervading the authorities consequent upon the demonstration of the value of the reformative conception carried to its logical conclusion, there is no reason why the prison system should not be revolutionised in the course of a generation ; prisons will become centres of healing

¹ *English Prisons To-day*, Edited by Stephen Hobhouse and A. Fenner Brockway, p. 445.

for afflicted citizens. As the late Chairman of the Prison Commissioners has written :¹

“ Given firm, thoughtful, humane administration in all that concerns the actual custody of all offenders of both sexes of the various categories, given a wise classification and treatment according to age, sex, and nature of the offence—the future lies in Preventive Science; on the one hand, medical science, strictly so-called, which shall, by diagnosis and therapeutics of the mental and physical state (in early age before it is too late), correct and restrain by suitable preventive means, institutional or otherwise, the tendency to anti-social conduct; and on the other, social or political science, which, by raising the standard of life among the masses, will reconstitute the *milieu* whence vice and misery spring.”

In the words of another eminent writer :² “ Now we are beginning to seek out the actual sources of social troubles, and to discover them in circumstances rather than sins, and to find them to be by no means evils inevitable, due to human depravity, but much more to bad conditions which have been tolerated, if not maintained, through selfishness and neglect.” “ Where there is a social problem, there is a social *wrong* at the bottom of it,” said Henry George. The stern and unavoidable problem which science and machinery have set before civilisation—the *just* producing and distributing of wealth—has to be solved ere crime will disappear. Prison reform means social reform.

¹ Ruggles-Brise, *The English Prison System*, p. 17.

² George Ives, *A History of Penal Methods*, p. 6.

SECTION

INTERNATIONAL POLICY

CHAPTER IV

THE INTERNATIONAL MIND

BY C. DELISLE BURNS, M.A., D.LITT.

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Labour Internationalism—Not Anti-National—Need for International Control—Problem of Diplomatic Relations—Tory and Communist Extremes—The Liberal Tradition—Labour's Experience of International Action—Beginnings of World Government—New International Organisations—International Labour Legislation—Relations between Peoples—Problem of International Disarmament—Education for International Life.

THE great body of British Labour opinion and the clearest thinkers of the movement have always been patriotic. That is to say, they have loved and served their country. The institutions of the country, whatever their defects, are known to be the results of many centuries of growth; for the national unity is ancient and assured, not new and doubtful, as it is in Italy and may be in Germany. When, therefore, British Labour adopts an international policy or expresses the international mind, it is not in revolt from British institutions or British experience. We build our internationalism upon the basis of national experience and do not repudiate our national tradition.

But the fact that Labour is international in its outlook does distinguish it from other parties or groups, for it implies a kind of patriotism which is not everywhere accepted. Patriotism may mean, "My country, right or wrong"; but that is emphatically not the meaning which Labour gives it. On the other hand, one may serve one's country because it has done and can do great deeds for the rest of the world. One's country is then an instrument of service, not a bundle of interests and claims; and patriotism then means something

less barbaric than it has meant in the past. That is the patriotism of Labour, and that patriotism is genuinely international.

A comparison with the growth of our own nation will make clearer the meaning of the international mind. When we elect to Parliament the representative of York or Edinburgh, we do not expect him to speak only in the interests of the particular place he represents. He is to speak for the interests of the whole of Great Britain, as understood in York or Edinburgh. Thus, each part of the nation contributes its own view of the common interest of the whole. There are some interests of towns which are opposed to the interests of rural areas; and the interests of one part of Great Britain may be opposed to those of another part. But we do not imagine that Parliament is a mere battleground for contending interests, since we assume that the common interests of the whole nation must take precedence. Thus we have in every part of England the national mind and not merely the mind of the locality. Similarly, in international affairs there may be conflicting interests of different nations, and these indeed fill the imaginations of men to-day more frequently and more effectually than do the common interests. But there are some common interests, and there can be a British or a French or an Italian view of these. A man is not less British if he thinks of the common interests of many peoples, just as a man is no less a Yorkshireman if he thinks of the common interests of all England. Each nation retains its proper point of view, but each may think of problems and devise policies which are common to many nations. When that occurs, the international mind exists.

When we speak of the international mind, therefore, we do not mean to deny that affection for one's own country is a good basis for thinking and for action. It is clear, however, that in the modern world there are many problems which cannot be solved, cannot indeed even be understood, unless they are dealt with internationally. It is impossible in such cases to disentangle the interests of different nations. For example, epidemic disease cannot be controlled by one Government acting alone, and since bacteria do not respect frontiers, the interests of many nations are involved. It follows that the only possible method of preventing the spread of epidemics is joint action by many Governments, each acting in the interest of all peoples. That is to say, the Government of

Great Britain by restricting the spread of epidemics is acting in the interest of other nations; and it is to the interest of Great Britain that other nations should help to deal with the common enemy of man. To see such problems and such methods of dealing with them is to have the international mind. For the international mind is not an empty froth of sentiments nor a mere perception that foreign peoples exist. It is the grasp of international problems. It is the ability to think in terms not limited by frontiers. It is the force which moves the peoples to common action for common ends.

The British Labour Movement has this international mind, and the policy of the Labour Party, either in or out of office, is therefore essentially different from any traditional policy. Diplomacy and other contacts between the peoples are envisaged anew by Labour.

There are two opposite extremes in the treatment of the problems of diplomacy, Toryism and Communism. They have this in common, that they disregard the attitude and the opinions of the common man. The real Tory believes that diplomacy is a very difficult art reserved for the genius of the "upper" classes; he does not think that the common man is able to understand foreign affairs or international problems. The Communist agrees with the Tory in looking to a small select group—not an "upper" class, but a quasi-religious caste of believers in the true gospel. The proletarian mind claimed by this minority is to guide the mass of the unintelligent through the mazes of hostility between nations. Against both these autocracies the Labour attitude implies a confidence in the common man. It is true that the people are ignorant of details, but it is an absurd tradition that diplomacy consists of details. The weakness of diplomats generally is that they cannot see the wood for the trees. The common man knows quite well enough what he needs in international affairs—namely, peace and the intercourse which brings him food and clothing and ideas. From this knowledge of the more fundamental facts a Labour policy can grow, if its exponents derive their experience from continual contact with the people, for the people are much more likely to have the root of the matter in them than any experts.

It is sometimes said, even by supporters of the Labour Party, that the Labour policy in foreign affairs is only a continuance of the old Liberal tradition. But this is a misunderstanding. The Liberal tradition in the nineteenth century has

been largely identified with the policy of non-intervention and isolation. Liberals feared foreign entanglements. They did, indeed, promote interference to save particular groups of Eastern Christians; and they never quite refused to accept the use of Great Britain's influence in liberalising foreign countries. But in the main their foreign policy was negative; and in principle they tended to be suspicious of alliances and common action. As they idealised the individual, so they idealised the separate nation; for they really believed that if every man looked after himself and every group was left to itself, the common good would be achieved. It was a faith which had certain elements of nobility, but a faith unreasonably blind. It is very different from the belief on which international co-operation must rest.

In contrast with the Liberal tradition we assert that the common good is not likely to be achieved if its achievement is left to chance or to that Providence which Adam Smith called "the hidden hand." The common interest of many nations must be clearly understood and definitely pursued by different nations, or it will never be attained. Just as in domestic life even the Individualist father does not pursue his own individual interest, so in the family of nations we may soon be civilised enough to work for one another. That is the basic principle of Labour internationalism, and a real grasp of its meaning has been possible for Labour groups precisely because members of such groups have had an experience unknown to the diplomats and the Liberal or Conservative politicians who are interested in foreign affairs. Labour groups, both political and industrial, have their international affiliations. This gives to the Labour Movement a very peculiar ability in the adjustment of national differences. It is sometimes said, indeed, that diplomatists are not usually of a Labour "colour," and that Labour is inexperienced in the technique of diplomacy; but that is similar to the charge that Labour is not fit to govern. As a matter of fact the Trade-Union leader and the representative of such societies as the I.L.P. have much more experience in dealing with other men, and particularly of dealing with men of other nations, than the smart barrister or the country gentleman. The international mind has developed in the Labour Movement not because of any abstract theory, but because of practical experience. It has in practice been found in international gatherings that men of different nations can and do reach similar conclusions in regard

to problems which are common to all. The meetings of the Socialist Internationals have been going on for years; and there is the general Trade Union International as well as other international associations for organised workers in separate industries. From the experience thus gained, Labour has developed in a practical sense the international mind; and organised Labour is much more capable than any other class in the nation of thinking in concrete terms of international issues. Clearly some other international associations, educational or scientific, commercial or financial, have given rise to new ways of thinking among their members; and even between Governments there is now some common action.

THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

The international experience of the Labour Movement has been expressed by the formation of associations of workers and Socialists of many countries. As far back as 1864, when Trade Unions were not permitted anywhere in the world except in Great Britain, the First International was founded in London. Karl Marx was at that time the chief power in the new Socialist organisations, but there were many members of the Labour Movements in different countries who did not agree with him, and the First International quietly expired after the Franco-German War. But disagreements as to policy never destroyed the growth of the international mind among the workers. In Paris in 1889 the Second International was founded as an association of Socialist parties in different countries. There was then, of course, no such organisation in England as the present Labour Party with its strength in the Trade Unions, and in 1908, long after the Independent Labour had joined the International, the proposal that the Labour Party should join the International was opposed by some members of the party on the ground that the Labour Party was not a Socialist body.

That issue is now closed. The affiliation was decided by vote, and everyone recognises now that the Labour Party is Socialist. The International therefore represents the agreement between Socialist parties to co-operate for common purposes; and many resolutions were passed at the Conferences of the International before the War in view of the danger of war which might divide the parties of the different nations. Great men such as Jaurès saw quite clearly that national life and loyalty to national traditions could be reconciled with

internationalism ; but the mind of the time was weak and confused. There was no practical plan for common action. The War came, and the International disappeared.

This does not mean failure any more than when a man falls his effort is ended. The world in which the international mind was struggling to develop was hostile to new conceptions, just as the world of 1815 was hostile to democracy. But the Napoleonic world of petty despots has gone ; and the world of 1914 and 1924 will go the same way to oblivion. The International has risen again and is gathering strength.

After the War the hostility of Socialist parties in the countries which fought in the War was gradually diminished. Meetings took place in 1919 and 1920 which founded again the Second International with its office in London. But new issues had arisen. The Russian Revolution had ended with the triumph of the Communist party known as the Bolsheviks, whose leaders could not forget or forgive the complacency of some of the older Labour leaders during the War. Sections, therefore, of the Labour organisations in many countries, following the lead of the Bolsheviks, declared for a Third International, which would have no compromise or parley with existing systems of government. In 1922 an attempt was made by representatives of these two sections, both of which claimed to be genuinely international, to heal the breach in the Labour Movement ; but the attempt failed. The parties in France and Italy especially were completely divided ; and the international mind of Labour is still without an adequate organ of expression because of disagreement on methods and objects. The British Labour Movement, however, is quite decidedly within the Second, and opposed to the policy of the Third, International. This has to be said because of the confusion which is sometimes created by opponents of internationalism when they put down to the Socialist International whatever is said by Communists. But divisions do not indicate any cessation of growth. Even the bitterest opponents within the various Labour groups agree that the Labour outlook is essentially international, and all parties agree to say, although with slightly different emphasis on different words, "Workers of the World, unite ! You have nothing to lose but your chains."

It is not sufficient for small groups in many different countries to agree together, although an agreement may be the first step in the realisation of the Labour policy of peace ;

but each Labour group must direct or influence the policy of its own country. Thus the taking over of the Government of Great Britain by the British Labour Party is a victory for the international mind in politics.

This spirit has been expressed in the May Day message, 1924, from the first Labour Prime Minister of Great Britain, in the following words: "This year still May Day finds millions, at home and abroad, unhappy, oppressed, fearful. At the same time it brings with it the knowledge that, just as the hard crust of the earth is breaking and opening in spring, so throughout the world the old evil order of distrust, hate, division, is being attacked by the new order of co-operation and service. . . . British Labour hopes that what it is doing here may give heart to its kindred movements elsewhere, and that before long the powers of oppression and dictatorship will give place to those of democracy and freedom."

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION

Such beginnings of the international mind as we find now operating in the government of the world are very largely the result of war experience and of the efforts of a few after the War. Indeed, the Peace Conference at Paris in 1919 may be taken as an example of the struggle between the old diplomacy and the international mind. President Wilson had the international outlook and, with all his limitations, he had the greatness to fight for the establishment of a new principle in international affairs. He won his battle for a League of Nations in spite of determined opposition and still more dangerous hypocrisy; but he failed on almost every other point. The Peace treaties therefore contain the provision for a new international organisation—the League—and also the barbaric partitioning of the spoils and savage vindictiveness of the old order. In these treaties we may see the international mind at odds with the traditional frontier-mind of primitive times. There are traces in the Peace treaties of a new principle which may become operative in the contact of peoples; for example, the mandatory principle in regard to "undeveloped" peoples, the provision for minorities, the supervision of certain territories by an international authority. Such experiments are connected with the traces of international organisation which existed even before the War, such as the Universal Postal Union and the Union for Public Health.

Thus the operations of the international mind are quite

definite and practical, and the policy of the Labour Movement in regard to such issues is described in detail in the sections of this work which treat of the revision of the Peace treaties and the development of the League of Nations. It is only necessary here to indicate some very general applications of the new principle to the problems of international intercourse, for the international mind must be given a "body," if it is not to become an ineffectual ghost.

One of the chief advances in international government which can be put to the credit of the Labour Movement in all countries is the International Labour Organisation of the League of Nations. The Labour groups, political and industrial, in many countries during the War had urged that peace should initiate a great advance in Labour legislation. The Governments at that time found it convenient to promise "Reconstruction"; and when the Peace Conference met, a plan was proposed for advancing international Labour legislation. By that time most of the Labour groups had become very critical of their Governments, and it was not found possible to use authoritative Labour representations in the Conference. But the ideas of the Labour Movement were known; and an agreement to establish an International Labour Office was inserted in the Peace treaties in connection with the Covenant of the League of Nations.

This is not the place for a description of the new organisation; but it should be noted that in this aspect of its activities the League is not a purely governmental institution. The principle of "functional" representation was accepted in that the Governing Body and the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation include representatives of industrial Labour organisations and of the employers' associations. Thus the Trade Unions of many countries have entered into the very heart of international government. Their representatives consider, in session with the representatives of the Governments in the League, all problems directly affecting the conditions of industrial workers in many countries. It has already been shown that the Labour Internationals grew out of the feeling that the fortunes of the workers in any one country were often affected by the fortunes of foreign workers: enslavement or exploitation anywhere tended to produce similar conditions elsewhere. But to improve conditions the Law was a potent instrument; and international agreements even before the War had shown what could be done by many

Governments acting together. So now the International Labour Organisation is an instrument by which Labour can speed up the action of Governments in industrial reform. It should be noted that the international mind of Labour has been strong enough to compel the admission of Germany into this section of the League as far back as 1919, although obsolete frontier-thinking still in 1924 excludes Germany from the Council and Assembly of the League.

The conventions and recommendations passed by the International Labour Conferences have had chequered histories. Some have been quite successful. Others have been blocked by reactionary forces in one country or another; and others have been found inapplicable or difficult to insert into the legislative structure of some countries. It is recognised, of course, that we are in an experimental period. No one yet knows how best to govern internationally; and since countries differ greatly in their industrial conditions, probably the method of basing national laws on international agreements needs some improvement. But we are concerned here not so much with the details of a policy as with its general tendency.

Clearly the International Labour Organisation has been produced by what we have called the international mind and can be used by that mind. So far the peoples have looked to the International Labour Conventions of the League as means for improving their own domestic conditions. Thus the workers of England, for example, may receive benefit from international agreements entered into at Geneva: and that is a very real and valuable effect of the international mind. But the function of the International Labour Organisation is much more subtle and more drastic than that. It is not simply a means for speeding up national legislation. It is and it may become still more an instrument for the entry of the Labour point of view into the councils hitherto reserved for diplomats. That is to say, the Labour Office may be the means by which the workers can prevent the evil effects upon their own standards of life which follow from political agreements often without any conscious thought of the negotiators. For example, the Reparations controversy could conceivably end with an arrangement which enslaved the German workers; but it is the true function of the Labour Office to remind the Governments that whatever their financial or military needs, the maintenance of a humane life for the workers must be a

“first charge” on the profits of diplomacy. A representative of international Labour should sit at the same table with the diplomatists or plenipotentiaries at all international conferences. Thus the needs of the workers will not be forgotten in the controversies between Governments.

DIPLOMACY

The relations between peoples, even if the League of Nations becomes much more powerful, will continue to depend upon some form of diplomacy. But what effect can the international mind have in diplomacy? The traditions of diplomacy connect it with secrecy, deceit, and the unscrupulous pursuit of separate national interests; so that when diplomats of many countries meet, they regard one another as potential enemies or at least advocates of opposing clients. Diplomacy has a bad name and the peoples of the world are generally suspicious of its methods, even if they are willing to take advantage of its results. Every student of international affairs, however, knows that diplomats are not generally rogues and that the methods of the most skilful ambassadors and Foreign Secretaries are by no means the traditional methods of the diplomacy of past centuries. Diplomacy to-day is not always or often deceitful, although negotiations continue to be secret in international affairs just as they are in industrial matters.

The fundamental problem of contemporary diplomacy is the attitude of the representatives of the different nations, for they generally continue to maintain the obsolete attitude of the advocate who aims only at obtaining as much as he can for his own side. The histories of the Peace Conference at Paris and of the many Conferences which have taken place since prove that politicians as well as diplomatists are still dominated by frontier-vision. Generally speaking, the British representative will seize as much as he can for Great Britain, either in territory or concessions; and the representative of France will do the same for France, counting himself successful if he has diminished British “prestige” by getting more than the British representative. Worse still, each representative carries a big stick. Behind the doors of the conference-room are the armies, navies, and air forces of the rival negotiators. They can be brought in whenever the skill or the knowledge of the negotiator proves inadequate. They are the final proofs of the existence of national claims; and although all such claims are assumed to be just, it is often useful to displace

the more subtle question of justice by the much easier calculation of comparative military strength. Thus when the smaller States at the Peace Conference complained that their views were not being considered by the "Big Four," M. Clemenceau replied that this was natural because the small States had not great armies. This was a candid expression of an obsolete point of view.

But what alternative is practicable? Is not diplomacy inevitably nationalistic? Can statesmen and diplomatists in practice speak for anything but their own nation? These questions seem simple, but they really hide a confusion of mind in regard to the purpose of diplomacy, for, as we have already shown, there is no inevitable conflict between the national and the international point of view. Everyone admits that in some issues the interests of France, Italy, Germany, and Great Britain may be opposed; but these are not the main issues with which modern diplomacy should deal. It is, on the contrary, quite practical for a diplomatist or a statesman to think of himself as co-operating with the representatives of other nations in the attainment of a common interest of many nations; and of course the best diplomatists already do act upon this principle. It may seem unkind to say so, but politicians pretending to be statesmen are often very much more obsolete in their methods and principles than professional diplomatists. Examples are obvious to anyone acquainted with recent history. A Conference of national representatives in which all, or at least the ablest and strongest, definitely treated foreign Governments as co-operators in the same task would completely transform the chaos of international affairs; that is to say, the international mind, far from repudiating diplomacy, would have taken it over. The great issues of contemporary international politics, reparations, undeveloped countries, the "expansion" of growing nations, are all international. They are issues which cannot even be understood by men whose vision is limited by the frontiers of their own country; and the problems with which diplomacy has to deal therefore emphatically necessitate the international mind in the conferences of diplomatists and statesmen.

No solution of such problems in the modern world is to be found by merely pitting the interests of one nation against those of another, for the common interests of all nations are obviously so much more important. It may seem that we shall become richer or happier or more secure if our neighbours

are poorer and weaker ; but as a matter of fact and quite without any appeal to sentiment it has proved not to be so. Idealism in international politics is much more practical than cynicism or selfishness. We need not call on men to be virtuous ; we need only ask them to be sensible.

The most fundamental common interest of the peoples of the world at present is Peace. We in Great Britain and the great nation that is growing up in the United States do not understand how much the rest of the world is still dominated by war conditions. Since the Armistice Great Britain and the United States have withdrawn out of the tangle of alliances and military agreements which confuse Europe ; and we hardly feel the disturbances which are occurring in Asia. In Africa, too, the peoples are not as they were before the Great War : there are signs of great problems there. But even in Great Britain and in the United States there is a sense of insecurity. The world has not been "reconstructed" ; the Golden Age which some politicians promised us as a reward for fighting their battles has not yet begun ; and indeed the world has not even "settled down" since the War. We are burdened with the cost of our past efforts ; but we are all preparing for new wars. Old gentlemen who write letters to the newspapers tell us that another Great War is inevitable ; and so it will be, if nothing is done now to escape from the chaos of contending national ambitions.

ARMAMENTS

Let us take, then, as another example of the use of the international mind, the great problem of armaments. It may be assumed that so long as each nation has to look after its own interests for itself, each will continue to be armed. There are some writers of Utopian politics who say that if any great nation completely disarmed itself, nothing evil would happen to it and the world would follow suit. Such possibilities must be left to philosophic speculation ; for it is impossible in practical politics to conceive of any great nation so acting. We do not deny the possibility of miracles ; but we cannot base our policy upon their occurrence. Short of complete disarmament, however, can we not reduce armaments considerably ?

The reduction of armaments is an international problem which no nation can achieve even for itself without some sort of common action on the part of many nations. No nation is

likely to reduce its armed forces unless other nations do so in the same proportion. The arguments in favour of a reduction are everywhere the same. First, there is the cost. In the year 1921-2 Great Britain used 63 per cent. of the total annual expenditure to pay for past and future wars. The interest on War Debt alone cost more than we could raise by all our income-tax and death duties. Only 6 per cent. of the total was spent on education by the Central Government. Indeed, in every shilling a man pays in taxation, about ninepence goes to pay for past wars and for the armed forces in preparation for future wars. For many generations we are likely to be burdened with the cost of the Great War, and yet we are spending as much as ever we did in preparation for new wars. The immense cost of armed forces makes it impossible to use public funds as they should be used for education and social development. Expenditure on armaments is waste, both because it is merely for the sake of providing an obstacle to the use of force by others who are also spending large sums to provide against us, and because a large portion of the instruments of war which are continually being renewed and improved is out of date before the next war comes. The immense waste of wealth in the mere preparation for war would make us ashamed of our folly if we were not so accustomed to it.

But there is another reason, besides the cost, for reducing armaments. As each nation makes itself more and more secure it attempts to outstrip possible opponents by increasing its armed forces. Thus the British Labour Government, having in view the existing anarchy of international affairs, was compelled to increase the amount spent on aircraft. Now, increase of armaments is the only alternative to a general agreement on reduction, for armaments do not stand still; unless a deliberate effort is made to reduce them they tend to grow. This is one of the causes of war. Men who have spent years in perfecting an instrument will desire to use it, and the strain of competition will naturally drive one of the competitors to try a fall at the moment when he thinks his own armaments are superior to those of his opponents. The policy for the prevention of war, therefore, must include some plan for reducing armaments.

Such a plan may be either the mere agreement between possible opponents not to outbuild each other, but to retain an existing proportion of strength, or it may be a much more

radical plan of the international mind. The former plan was that of the Washington Conference, which did indeed improve the situation a little, since it prevented the extreme immediate race in armaments. But that leaves the situation in essentials unchanged, and it is probable that competition in armed forces will continue in fields not covered by the Washington Agreements. The more radical plan has already been suggested in the Covenant of the League.

Article X of the Covenant is one of the most controversial in the whole treaty. It appears to bind the members of the League to defend all the frontiers recognised in the Peace treaties, and thus to support many injustices which are dealt with in the section of this book on the Revision of the Peace Treaties. Article X also makes the United States hesitate to join the League. Now, whatever meaning it has, or whatever development it receives, as suggested in the section on the League of Nations, the important point about it is that it recognises defence as an international problem. Thus the defence of Belgium or any other State is regarded as the duty of all members of the League. We know very well how the word "defence" is misused and how militarists argue that the best defensive is an offensive. But the fundamental issue is the conflict between two attitudes—the old attitude which left each nation to look after itself, and the new international mind which recognises the common interest of all nations in the security of each. The method for establishing security by means of an international organisation is difficult to devise; but some such method must be devised if we are to escape from the domination of Great Powers over small States and from military alliances.

EDUCATION

The great problems of politics and economics show where the international mind may operate; but it is necessary to ask how the international mind itself can grow and obtain force to do its work. The conflict of ideas and principles takes place in the schools and universities, among those whose function it is to think out human ideals and among the best of the new generation; therefore the position and power of international ideas largely depend upon education. It has often been pointed out that the military spirit of pre-war Germany was created and developed by the schools. Indeed, the ancient Greek philosopher knew that whoever controls

education can in the long-run dictate policy. But the old ideas of national rivalry and suspicion of foreigners are still powerful. The text-books of history still emphasise our conflicts with other nations and say little or nothing of our debt to them. Those men of our own nation are given most admiration in the histories who have fought against foreigners, and it is sometimes assumed that hatred must be inculcated.

For example, a French primer *Les Lectures des Petits*, printed after the War and now in its eighth edition, ends with the following sentences to be completed by the children: "The Germans killed . . . The Germans destroyed . . . The Germans burned . . .," and with an illustration of a German shooting a child is the following question and answer: "My child, you will not forget these crimes?—I promise I will not, mother." This is an example of the way in which the minds of new generations are poisoned, not only in France, but in many of the countries of Europe.

Lest it may be believed that the absurdities of national prejudice are confined to foreign nations or to school text-books, another example must be chosen. A certain Oxford historian wrote a history of the Middle Ages, which was finished just before the War, in which he gave great praise to the German spirit. The War began before the work could be published, so the author added a preface to indicate that he had been completely misled and that the German spirit was really very wicked. The Slav spirit, on the contrary, the preface said, was admirable, especially in the sturdy Bulgarians. Then the Bulgarians joined the Germans and the preface had to be forgotten! So long as history is national propaganda we shall have the primitive history which our universities still promote.

There is an alternative. The history of civilisation, of course, contains many conflicts, as it contains oppression, disease, superstition, and ignorance; but these have not made civilisation better than barbarism. If our circumstances are in any way better than our forefathers', it is due to the co-operation of men of many different nations; and therefore the history of civilisation is the history of peaceful international intercourse. The mind which can see the contribution of many nations to the store possessed by each nation can re-write history. That international mind must dominate the schools. The new generations must begin to understand that civilisation consists of literature, music, painting, and the

other arts, of the ability to see facts clearly which we call science, and not of wealth and power or of the mere adaptation of art and science which produces and improves machinery. But in the arts and in science each nation has contributed to the common store by intercourse with other nations. Italy has given us painting, Germany music, France scientific method; and England has added drama and discovery. The contributions of China and India have not yet been fully interwoven with the texture of civilisation called Western; but the continuance of peace will, no doubt, bring new and more glorious flowers to bloom when the nations look to each other for assistance in the common task.

It may be said that all this is very excellent but not essentially connected with Labour or the Labour Movement. On the one hand, there are some members of the Labour organisations who believe that the only real problems are those of domestic policy and that diplomacy and wars have no special interest for Labour. On the other hand, there are opponents of the Labour point of view and the officially expressed Labour policy who say that the policy of peace and international intercourse is merely a plaything of a few intellectuals and does not represent the true attitude of the working-man.

There are, of course, many members of the Labour Movement, both on the political and on the industrial side, who are blind to the importance of international problems. But although it may be necessary to concentrate at certain moments or in certain localities upon housing or child-welfare or municipal gas, it is equally clear that even those problems are affected by the international situation. The Great War should have proved conclusively to all members of the Labour Movement that if at any moment young men may be called on to die in battle and bombs may begin to drop on our cities, international affairs are very obviously the concern of the ordinary man. And we have already remarked that social services cannot be developed so long as the cost of armaments continues. Some international policy is therefore an essential part of the Labour programme of reforms, and if that policy is to be a consistent part of the whole programme, it must be the policy of the international mind.

As for those fine fellows who affect to believe that "intellectuals" supply policies of their own for the Labour Movement, the answer to them is that the so-called working-man is often a quicker and clearer thinker than the intel-

lectual. The imaginary working-man who thinks what his "betters" desire him to think does not exist in practical politics. If he did, the Labour Party could never have become the Government of Great Britain. Of course, there are many who are not skilled in the details of politics and diplomacy; but their attitude is as definitely that of the international mind as the attitude of skilled diplomatists in regard, for example, to municipal milk-supply is the attitude of their grandmothers. Not the intellectuals, but the bitter sense of common wrongs in the industrial system formed the beginnings of the international mind in the Labour groups of Europe. Not the intellectuals, but the hard experience of common men on foreign battlefields and distant seas has impressed the international mind upon the Labour Movement. Many common men think deeply who cannot well express their thought; for it is a mere folly of superior persons to mistake the silence of ordinary men for ignorance or carelessness, when in fact, the vociferous clamour of Jingoism is much more clearly a proof of ignorant recklessness. There is indeed a close connection between the attitude of those who have to work for their living and genuine art and science; but the connoisseur or collector who spends his unearned surplus in buying the service of artists does not really understand how radical art can be. Thus it is a genuine and essential Labour attitude which looks to the increase of education, in its best meaning, for the creation and development of the international mind.

This need not imply that the new generation is converted to the policy of Labour parties by the education they receive; for true education cannot be propaganda for any political programme. But it is implied in what we have so far argued that the whole basis, the underlying assumptions, in education should provide a new atmosphere in which the schools would not be weighted, as they are now, against international amity and social progress. In a fair field without favour Labour policy could more than hold its own. All we ask is that the obsolete assumptions of the past shall be displaced from the minds of the new generations by their education.

The future is not formed by vague desires for a better world, but by the skilful application of principles to specific problems. The international mind is already a force in politics. It is not the vague sentiment of friendliness for other nations nor a mere source of manifestos and resolutions. It is an active power which may destroy the old and build the

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new. It is at work in the present world as the sap is at work in the trees before the leaves appear. It can be felt, but perhaps only by those who have a sense of expectation; for men who are obsessed with historical fatalism are blind to revolutionary changes which are beneath the surface. Everywhere still the division between the nations, armed against each other, seems to dominate the situation. But other forces are at work. Men are thinking now about war with a breadth and boldness which was not possible in 1914. The new generation, in spite of the efforts of obsolete prejudice, will come into a much more adventurous world; and the international organisation of peace, which seemed before the Great War a dream of poets, may prove to have been begun even before the great majority are aware of it. That will not displace patriotism: for England and France and Italy will be greater and more worthy to be served when they are the homes of free men in a world at peace.

CHAPTER V

THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS

BY C. DELISLE BURNS, M.A., D.LITT.

Meaning of Imperialism—Socialist View on Patriotism and Responsibility—Imperial Economic Policy on Tariffs and Preference—Developing Imperial Resources—The Backward Races—Inter-Imperial Politics—Self-governing Dominions—The Problem of India—Crown Colonies—Mandated Territories—Co-operation for Peace.

THE British Empire has become the British Commonwealth of Nations not merely in the mind of the Labour Movement, but even in an Act of Parliament, for the Irish Free State is declared by Statute to have become a member of this Commonwealth. The change of names has an important bearing upon the relations of Great Britain and the Dominions, Colonies, and Dependencies, for it indicates the abolition of the claim to predominance on the part of Great Britain and it emphasises the co-operation of many races and creeds, which is the most valuable element in the British Commonwealth. Thus Imperialism has been diminished even among Conservatives and entirely abolished from the Labour Movement.

It may be worth while to consider the meaning of Imperialism. The Conservative Party has been consistently Imperialistic, and there has been in the past a peculiar phenomenon called Liberal Imperialism, although the Liberal tradition at an earlier date implied what was called "little Englandism." Imperialism has a very long history and its meaning has continually changed. It is a policy which advocates the expansion of one nation to take control over large new areas or to govern other races or peoples. It is not peculiar to Great Britain. Until Napoleon's time Imperialism was frankly predatory, for an Empire was a military despotism. But in the nineteenth century the promotion of trade led to a predominance of some European nations over lands and

peoples in vast areas of other continents; and modern Empires, therefore, tend to be economic rather than military in their most obvious characteristics. Imperialism was the faith of those who believed that this expansion of their own nation was for the good of the peoples governed as well as for the development of the whole world. It was a faith, therefore, naturally allied to that of the older Conservatism, which implied the superiority of a small group who would do good to others without any undue regard of what those others might foolishly regard as their good. So it might be argued that Africans and Asiatics really did not know half so well as our governing classes what was for their own good. The same was said in France in regard to Cochin-China or North-west Africa, and later by Germany in East and West Africa. The Portuguese and the Belgians never attempted to ennoble by reference to their own excellence the power they exercised in imperialist adventures; but even the United States had an access of imperialism, and Japan proved in Korea that the passion was not necessarily Western. For the British there was an additional cause of pride in the "far-flung" groups of their own race in lands hitherto scarcely inhabited. So we acquired Dominions as well as Possessions; and Imperialists very truly said that this was an important fact, but very foolishly added that it showed how Britain ruled everywhere. Certain financial and commercial groups made use of opportunities for developing other races for their own good in the pursuit of private enterprise, and the British system of government came to be regarded as a sort of commercial traveller. Trade was to follow the Flag, and the bonds of brotherly love for the Mother Country in India, Nigeria, and Egypt, as well as in Australia and Canada, were to be more tightly secured by tariffs!

In the movement towards the Left in British politics the Liberals adopted another view of the Empire. At first a small group of Radicals aimed at letting it look after itself, and they were reviled as Little Englanders; but it soon became obvious that one had to adopt some policy with regard to the Dominions, India, and the Colonies. A small but powerful group attempted to combine Liberal domestic reform with military Imperialism; but the real contribution of Liberalism is rather to be found in the initiation of reforms in India, looking towards self-government, and the great act of confidence in giving South Africa control of her own future.

In the early years of this century the Empire had become a problem for intellectuals, and the "Round Table" theorists made some valuable contributions to the general knowledge of the conditions of mind which had to be met. But these theorists were inclined to view all political problems as problems of the machinery of government, and they thought of government with the minds of its beneficiaries rather than its victims.

The Labour Movement had always a vague affection for all members of the British race beyond the seas, but was hardly aware of the problems of the tropics before the Labour Party came into existence. When, however, Labour began to act independently in politics, the principles of Socialism were naturally understood to be opposed to the domination of one nation over another and to military and economic force, for national domination and force gave a special advantage to small groups of "interested" persons within the community. Imperialism is necessarily opposed to Socialism, not only because Socialism looks towards international peace, but also because Socialism is opposed to private advantages gained at the expense of the common good. It will be useful, therefore, to apply the general principles of the Labour Movement to the problems of government within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

PATRIOTISM AND IMPERIALISM

There is some confusion of mind among well-intentioned persons in regard to admiration for the British Empire. An Empire Day has been instituted, and not only are the State schools used as instruments for political advocacy, in the manner of Prussia after Jena and Waterloo, but even the State religion in the Church of England is turned to complacency at our peculiar political relations to alien races. The Empire apparently expects every child to be proud of it and every good churchman to be thankful for it. The Flag is to be all but adored, as simpler and younger nations adore in the hope of securing their national unity. To "boost" is an undignified Americanism; but is there any other word for the attitude here indicated with regard to the Empire?

A simple mind even in the Labour Movement may go with the current and mistake Imperialism for patriotic service and affection; and the difficulty of distinguishing between Imperialism and patriotism is often made greater by the con-

fused rhetoric of Imperialists who charge their critics with treason. Some wild spirits have, by way of very justifiable counter-blast, waved a Red Flag instead of a Union Jack, which has shocked the old ladies of Kensington. In practical politics, however, it is quite possible to value the British Commonwealth and its symbols, even in those aspects in which it is undeniably an Empire, without boasting that we are fine fellows: for the Labour Movement regards British power as a very serious responsibility. We know very well that the schools must make the new generation aware of the responsibilities to which they are the heirs; but we see no reason for rhetoric in the matter. History and geography give a very large place to the British Empire; but the greatness of our tradition is due to the work of our unrhetorical administration in far lands and to the good which, chiefly by accident, our traders have done in the pursuit of their own aims.

Similarly in regard to the symbols of unity, we have a king at present who performs many useful functions. So long as those functions are necessary, we respect and maintain those who perform them, as we should respect our seventh footman if our house needed such a dignitary. The Labour Movement, therefore, is conscious that its patriotism is a devotion to a great people—a people of common men, most of them working with their hands—and not an advocacy of wealth or power, still less of royalty and social prestige. It is difficult for men and women obsessed by the dangers of unemployment and semi-starvation, ill-housed and ill-educated, to think of far-off issues, especially if such issues are presented in the terms of finance or military power. But the Labour Movement as a whole is more seriously moved by the fate of common men in other lands than are the specialists in administration or the representatives of trades. The Labour Movement, in fact, is aware of the true greatness of the common folk of Great Britain and of the genius of the race.

PROBLEMS OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

Two general problems arise in regard to the Commonwealth as a whole, one with regard to economic policy, the other with regard to international or foreign affairs; but besides these there are the particular problems of the Dominions, of India, of Crown Colony government, and of Mandates. It may be well to discuss first the more general issues.

ECONOMIC POLICY

The areas under the jurisdiction of the British Commonwealth contain immense natural resources still undeveloped. In the self-governing Dominions the products which are most valuable economically are food-stuffs, wheat and meat; and in the tropical dependencies the chief products are the raw materials of industry, rubber, oils, and nuts, besides the minor food-stuffs, tea, coffee, and sugar. Mr. Chamberlain quite frankly took the view that "our colonies are in the condition of undeveloped estates," and that "by the judicious investment of British money these estates which belong to the British Crown [*sic*] may be developed for the benefit of their own population and for the benefit of the greater population which is outside." (H.C., 22nd August, 1895.) This was a departure from the old *laissez-faire*; but it was a crude conception of economic policy. The Labour Movement also, both on the political and industrial side, is vitally interested in the development of the resources of the countries under British jurisdiction; and, of course, we are committed to a policy of economic activity on the part of the State. But Labour is not likely to accept the idea that the countries of the Commonwealth are "estates," still less the idea that they are preserves for the advantage of the inhabitants of Great Britain.

Both the Empire Resources Development Committee and the Dominions Royal Commission, which reported in 1917, were obsessed with the hope for an Empire which should be a closed ring of a vast and "self-sufficing" population, and this is altogether opposed to the Labour view; but so far as these bodies called attention to the need of more knowledge of facts and methods, they marked an advance. It is now generally accepted that economic resources must be developed with the direct assistance of the State.

TARIFFS AND PREFERENCE

For the purpose of binding the British Commonwealth together, the plan most vociferously argued at present is that of Imperial Preference. The governing idea, or at least the ostensible argument, is that the nations of the Commonwealth would then be more united; but it is sometimes also said that the plan is good for trade and employment.

Preference already exists in regard to goods from Great Britain in Canada (1897), New Zealand and South Africa

(1903), and Australia (1908). There is also preferential treatment given by Australia and New Zealand with regard to foods from South Africa. Preferential rates of duty were allowed by Great Britain in 1919 in regard to Empire tea, coffee, etc.; but the Labour Government of 1924 reduced some of the preference duties.¹ There is no doubt that Labour principles make it impossible to introduce preferential tariffs in Great Britain. The argument which is fatal to such tariffs in the minds of the Labour Movement is this: Whatever advantage particular groups may derive from their operation, tariffs always produce a conflict of interest between the community at large and the direct beneficiaries of the tariffs. With this is connected the argument that tariffs make it easier for small groups in advantageous positions to levy quite unknown tribute on the consumer. Behind a tariff hide all kinds of "private interest," and often the incompetence which cannot meet its competitors in the open field. Besides, the best bond of union for the nations in the Commonwealth is the free choice of all, not the mere wealth or other economic advantage which certain groups may derive from excluding foreign trade. Not tariffs, but brains will develop the Commonwealth.

The actual progress of the development of resources in the British Commonwealth has, in fact, been quite in accordance with Labour principles. It has been due to (1) the increase of knowledge, giving control of disease and power to derive more advantage from agriculture, and (2) the improvement of rail and ship transport. The Dominions have been themselves active in these matters, as is proved by the advances in the production of wool and meat and corn and the institution of State banking and State steamships in Australia.

For further development the Dominions must determine the method of improving their own transport system, as, for example, Canada must for herself solve the problem of transporting her wheat. The absurd complications of the Australian railway system, where, for example, one has to change on to a different gauge in each of the States, are matters for the people of the Australian Commonwealth. State-ownership is useless without a far-seeing policy; but in New Zealand State-ownership of railways seems to have been successful.

¹ The position in July 1924 is given in full in the Official Debates, 26th June, 1924, col. 619. The Churchill Budget of 1925 restored some of the preferential duties.

In the non-self-governing parts of the British Commonwealth Great Britain has made great advances through the schools of Tropical Medicine and Tropical Agriculture. Similarly railway and river transport may need assistance or initiative from Great Britain. For this the Labour Movement is prepared; but it is not, as its opponents sometimes seem to imagine, wedded to direct enterprise by the State in every case, although according to the official Report on Private Enterprise in Tropical Africa [Cmd. 2016, 1924], it seems clear that the State must initiate enterprise there.

The cotton trade of Lancashire depends in part upon supplies of raw material from India, Uganda, the Sudan, and the West Indies; but Australia and Nigeria may be important sources in a few years. Similarly the manufacture of woollen goods in Great Britain depends partly upon supplies from Australia and New Zealand and new sources of supply may be developed. It is Labour policy for the British Commonwealth that all necessary assistance should be given in order to increase the amount and the regularity of supplies; but further discussion must be reserved for the section dealing with the Crown Colonies.

A further general principle in regard to economic issues is the full and free development of the peoples of the Commonwealth who are not of our race. Already India has been given power to adopt the policy of tariffs for safeguarding her own products. Much as we may regret the use made of liberty, we cannot refuse to grant it. The long predominance of English interests in the economic life of India as in the case of Ireland has undoubtedly led to an extreme view of those interests of India and Ireland which are opposed to English interests. But adjustment must be found on the basis of liberty, not on the basis of submission of the worker party.

But the peoples of less civilised races than are most races of India—the peoples of Africa, for example—must also have a full and free development. The details will be dealt with below. Here it will be enough to say that (1) it is *not* Labour policy because of past or present evils of alien rule to withdraw altogether from the government of undeveloped peoples, and (2) it *is* Labour policy to give a predominant importance in any land to the native inhabitants. To run away from responsibilities is not good internationalism. Great Britain can give education, health, transport, and public organisation to natives who could not at present attain these goods unaided.

We have much to do in spreading knowledge, social ability, and methods of justice. On the other hand, we must not give education or roads in undeveloped areas in such a way as to benefit chiefly the white settler or traders. There is no race so undeveloped as not to be able to contribute something of its own to the life of the Commonwealth.

FOREIGN POLICY

With regard to what is called Empire foreign policy or a common policy for all the British Commonwealth in regard to other States, there is no disagreement in the leading ideas of the different political parties. All would prefer to retain a single common policy, especially in regard to issues involving the risk of war; but Labour would tend to allow greater independence of opinion and action to the great Dominions. The presence of diplomatic representatives of the Dominions at foreign capitals is already an accomplished fact; and there is no doubt that the Dominions may negotiate their own commercial treaties. For issues involving the risk of war, however, the Commonwealth must act together (1) in negotiation, (2) in the signature of treaties, and (3) in carrying out obligations. In the Labour view, therefore, as no doubt in the view of some other groups, the Dominion Governments must be continually in conference or consultation with our Foreign Secretary. The method is a matter of detail which cannot be discussed here. It must be remembered also that Foreign policy now involves the fate of races which have not self-government, and therefore any common policy for the Commonwealth must give due weight to the interests of the peoples of India and of the African dependencies. India has already status in the League of Nations; but we should not forget that the peoples of Africa who are under British government also have interests which may not be identical with those of Great Britain.

THE DOMINIONS

We may now turn to the problems of detail, in regard to which the Dominions differ very greatly from the other parts of the British Commonwealth. In the first place, in the Labour Movement there is no proposal for immediately making the constitutional or the international status of Dominions identical with that of Great Britain. Constitutionally the British Parliament is absolute and cannot be bound even by

its own past Acts ; but Dominion Parliaments are limited by their Constitutions. In international law the war or peace entered into by the Ministers in Great Britain do in fact commit the Dominions ; and of course an act of war committed by any Dominion involves the whole British Commonwealth. The Dominions were not free in 1914, and are not to-day free to be "neutral" in a war declared by Great Britain ; they are involved, not out of benevolence or loyalty, but by necessity.

Nevertheless, the Labour Movement favours a rapid approach to greater equality between the peoples of the Dominions and the people of Great Britain without thereby making the Dominions independent sovereign States. With such an end in view certain definite changes can be suggested. For example, theoretically the Parliament of Great Britain subordinates to its own power the Parliaments which it has created in the Dominions by restricting the efficacy of Dominion Acts to the territory in which they are passed and by withholding assent to Acts ; but both these powers must be given up, and in case of friction, if no arrangement can be made, the case must be dealt with by a special overriding power exercised in an emergency. Similarly, the power of the Governor to refuse to dissolve Parliament or to dismiss Ministers must cease, and the Crown in the Dominions must take precisely the same position as the Crown in Great Britain in relation to Ministers. The power of the Colonial Secretary in Great Britain would thereby be curtailed.

With regard to the jurisdiction of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, it is felt that a Court sitting in London with no special knowledge of the growing complexity of Dominion problems cannot remain the final Court of Appeal. Indeed already the Commonwealth of Australia and the Union of South Africa have by their Constitutions power to restrict the right of such appeals ; and obviously it would be an improvement if the Privy Council could then sit in any of the Dominions. Such changes would probably lead to a new system of organisation for the Government of the whole Commonwealth ; but meantime there are problems peculiar to each Dominion which must be faced.

Australia.—The Labour parties in the Australian States have their own policies for domestic affairs, and in some matters of foreign policy ; for example, in regard to non-European immigrants. But the general principles are the same as those

of the British Labour Movement; and some of the examples of public enterprise under the inspiration of Australian Labour have been most valuable to Labour parties in other parts of the British Commonwealth. Emigration from Great Britain is one of the chief problems which concern the Labour Movement here and in Australia; and on this there is agreement that (1) no emigration should occur which will either immediately or eventually increase the flow of population to the cities and that (2) the assistance to emigrants should not denude Great Britain of her younger generation or her skilled workers nor create rivalries in Australia between the newcomers and the older Australians.

New Zealand.—A similar emigration policy refers to New Zealand, where the "nomination" system appears to have proved successful. [cf. Cmd. 2167, 1924.] The problems of Asiatic labour are such that the whole British Commonwealth is concerned, although New Zealand must decide the particular regulations which express general principles consonant with the maintenance of peace in the Pacific.

Canada.—The emigration policy advocated by Labour would be the same as that for Australia, except that in addition we are aware that immigrants into Canada sometimes slip through into the United States and therefore add to the British "quota" there. The connection of Canada with the United States is one which British Labour would seek to develop and to use in international affairs; but there is a special problem here in regard to the treatment of Japan. If that can be solved satisfactorily, the close relationship and yet the complete independence of Canada and the United States may be the means of bringing the British Commonwealth as a whole into complete agreement on international policy with the United States. This would undoubtedly promote the settlement of Europe and the organisation of peace in the world.

The Labour Government showed its special interest in the problems which arise from the emigration of children by sending to Canada a Delegation, which has issued a Report [Cmd. 2285, 1924].

South Africa.—The Union of South Africa must face very special problems. It has a population of 1,500,000 whites and about 5,250,000 coloured people, as well as about 164,000 Asiatics. The two white races belong to different traditions. The Dutch have in their mind the ideals of the small State

and republican democracy; the British in South Africa are frankly imperialist. The more moderate men of both races see the possibility of compromise within the existing British Commonwealth, and the British Labour Movement here, as elsewhere, would support a solution which gave great independence to the Union without dissolving the very valuable links with the world-wide British organisation of government. If any influence at all could be used without undermining the basic right of the peoples of the Union to decide for themselves, it would be in the direction of making the British Commonwealth less of a super-State and more of a community of independent but interdependent governments.

The white races in South Africa are agreed on the larger questions arising out of the position of natives and Indians. The policy of the Union Government may be admirable, but the real issues are decided by thousands of white employers who regard other races as so much labour-power. It is clearly the policy of the British Labour Movement to assist, again with due regard to the self-government of the Union, the development of the civilisation of the natives. Even if certain groups of organised white labour in the Union share the antiquated views in regard to the black man, British Labour cannot be committed to any policy which hinders the progress of the natives in the interests of white labour or white traders. The black man is not to be treated as a beast of burden; and although he cannot share in government at present so largely as the whites, increasing education should make his share in government larger every year. No one, of course, wants the white civilisation to be swamped by barbarism, but a real native civilisation can be developed side by side with the European.

As for Indians, the problem is very largely confined to Natal, where there are more Indians than whites in the midst of the surrounding negroid races. Immigration of Indians has already made the problem important, and yet further immigration cannot reasonably be stopped. The lower standard of life of Indian traders and craftsmen is the crucial element in the problem. Indians claim full equality of citizenship on the ground of the status of India in the British Commonwealth; but we are not logically compelled to admit equal citizenship in every land under British government for those who have citizenship in any one part of the Commonwealth. The adjustment of contact between races clearly

must take account not of mere numbers of individuals, but of differences of culture and tradition. Of course, this should not imply a domination by one race over another, but it may imply distinction of civic status in certain districts.

India.—The Labour Movement has always had the greatest sympathy with the difficulties of the population of India, and has always supported the aspirations of representatives of Indian opinion for self-government. Therefore the Labour Government which came into office in January 1924 naturally took a view of Indian problems which was fundamentally different from that of preceding Governments. But general sympathy and support do not solve problems of government, although they provide the necessary basis for a solution. The difficulty is immense. India has an area as great as that of Europe, a population of 319,000,000 with about 200 different languages. There is an ancient system of castes dividing the population into about 2,000 groups, and there are about 60,000,000 "untouchables," or what are called "depressed classes." There are immense economic problems of poverty and oppression. There is the problem of the relations between the parts of India and between each of these and a Central Government. There are problems of Native States and of imperial or foreign relations. Obviously therefore no simple measure will be adequate to bring about the happiness and full development of the abilities of the people of India, but we have the responsibility of attempting the task because of the position which the British democracy has inherited.

To the mind of Labour the first step is the removal of British domination. The Indians themselves must be called to co-operate in such full exercise of governmental power that the British shall have only assistance and not commands to offer. This may involve the presence of British officials in India at least for many years to come, if not permanently; although the authority under whom they act will naturally be Indian. The Labour Movement naturally hopes that the progressive realisation of self-government for India will not involve any severance from the British Commonwealth of Nations; but the bond must be the free choice of India. The fact that India is divided in its religions, in its social classes, and in its political opinions, does not diminish the importance of the common sentiments, tradition, interests, and aspirations of all India. But what is common to all India need not divide her from the rest of the British Common-

wealth. We look forward to complete freedom of an Indian system of government within the British Commonwealth.

The proposals of the memorandum by certain representatives of India, published on 12th June, 1924, appear to be consonant with British Labour policy. We know the difficulties of inexperience, but the deficiencies of India are in part of our own making and cannot justly excuse delay in a complete generosity. The step forward made by the institution of the Diarchy may have been useful in the past; but a bolder step is immediately needed, which British Labour is willing to make as soon as the action to be taken can be clearly defined. Meanwhile the problem of the method of government must not overshadow entirely the more important problems of religious rivalry and economic servitude.

The release of the poor workers in agricultural districts from exploitation by traders and money-lenders might be made easier by a bolder expenditure upon education. The immense burden of the Land Revenue has depressed the country for the sake of the maintenance of large military forces; but the British must now be prepared to take risks to diminish force and increase expenditure on social reform. It would be disastrous if we left the majority, after a century under our domination, helpless to resist a new domination of wealthy and selfish groups.

No praise can be too high for the ability and high purpose of great numbers of Englishmen in the Indian Civil Services, although some have been singularly blind to the absurdity of the superior airs they adopt. But even for the best agents of the most enlightened system of government the dominant position of an alien race is objectionable; and it is inexcusable when the natives of a country have shown competence enough to criticise the established system effectually. Our policy, then, is to give whatever power the competent representatives of India think they are able to exercise.

The fundamental attitude of Labour may imply taking risks. We have learnt by experience in Egypt that delay in granting the wishes for national independence does not make the position any easier or the risks any smaller. A bold act may be the most prudent policy: and hesitation in trusting the Indians themselves is usually a remnant of the "superior" air or the belief that we know better than they what is good for them. It may be that what is good for them will be bad for us. That is not an objection to letting them have it. The

next step, however, lies with the Indians. Agreement among Indians upon definite and detailed measures must precede any claim upon us.

CROWN COLONIES

The Crown Colonies differ in geographical character and population from the Dominions; but they also differ very greatly among themselves. The three chief groups, the West Indies, the African Colonies, and the Islands of the Pacific, have had very different histories, and their problems therefore require separate consideration. The Labour Movement has not any intimate connection with the population of these colonies, but receives from time to time visits and communications from small groups claiming to speak on behalf of the natives. Like the Colonial Office and the Government of Great Britain, the Labour Movement is often ignorant of the results of official action or of the growth of new sentiments and new hopes in the Crown Colonies; but this is partly due to the difficulty of obtaining the requisite information from peoples or tribes politically undeveloped.

In general the Labour Movement stands for the principle that the government of Colonies is for the sake of the majority of their inhabitants, and that therefore the Colonies are in no sense estates to be cultivated for the advantage of Great Britain, nor are the native populations to be exploited for the benefit of trade or the minority of inhabitants who are of British race. With this end in view the existing limits of representation, for example, in the West Indies and the practice of indirect rule in West Africa seem to be adequate for present needs. There is nothing new which the Labour Movement can demand in the carrying out of principles in regard to the non-white population in these Colonies, but a greater vigilance in regard to possible oppression would distinguish Labour from other parties.

The development of resources through native producers and owners in the Gold Coast has been extraordinarily successful. The method seems to be entirely consonant with Labour principles. The Government has given advice and information, but the actual growth and sale of produce is in the hands of the Africans. In 1885 only £6 worth of cocoa was exported from the Gold Coast; and in 1920 the export was valued at about £8 million. In Nigeria the direct rule of Moslem Emirs and the advice to pagan chiefs seem to have

succeeded, and advances towards representative government have been made recently on the coast. But in East Africa and in some smaller parts of the British Commonwealth there is more than a suspicion of compulsory labour. There is no excuse for this. The plea that it is good for the natives has been urged by Bishops and Peers; but it cannot be justified. The Labour Movement is committed to oppose all forms of enslavement, even those which are believed to be educational. Indeed the attempt to introduce European owners in control of paid native labour is probably the original error of which all the difficulties of compulsion or indenture are the results.

With regard to particular applications of principles, the problem of so-called democratic government cannot be solved by any general formula. In the West Indies there is an increasing number of educated members of the great negro race, which has not yet had its full development either in its native Africa or in the lands to which the cupidity of Europe deported its ancestors. There is more prejudice against negro blood in the British West Indies than in the French, although less than there is in the United States. The effort to give control of government to the persons governed is therefore difficult in the West Indies; but it must be made. The Labour Movement, however, is well aware that there can be a pretence of democracy in elections which small groups manipulate; and therefore we cannot advocate an immediate and general franchise for all inhabitants of these Colonies. Educational progress, nevertheless, can be much quicker than it is. The Governments of these Colonies could aim much more vigorously at a broad and free culture to be offered to all. Neither enough brains nor enough money has been put into education. If the planters and other beneficiaries of the old régime have to face increased taxation for such purposes, that should be no objection to an educational policy. Again, the development of natural resources should have in view the benefit of the negro population and not, as at present, mainly the governing and land-owning whites.

MANDATED TERRITORIES

The Mandate system under the Peace Treaties was originally intended to express a new principle in the treatment of conquered territories. During the war the Labour Movement, especially in the famous War Aims declaration, had pressed for real international government of subject peoples; and

although the same principles would apply to the government of peoples already under the jurisdiction of Great Britain and her Allies, it was recognised that only the late German colonies and Turkish dominions would be discussed at the end of the war. Arrangements were made by the British and other allied Governments during the War for the distribution of the spoils of war according to the old plan; but the League of Nations was established by the Peace Treaties, and some recognition, therefore, had to be made of the professions of Allied statesmen. Hence the Mandate system represents an exiguous result of tendencies which the Labour Movement promoted in the days when idealism was useful for the perorations of politicians' speeches; and even as it now stands, the Mandate system implies some principles of government which Labour approves. Between the immoral war commitments for the bartering of peoples and natural resources on the one hand, and, on the other, idealistic professions for propaganda, the Peace Treaties steered a middle course. We are still on that course and the past cannot be undone. The Labour Movement would incline to suggest, with all due respect to diplomats, that idealistic professions should be taken seriously as commitments to practical policy. The Mandate system must be such as really to protect and develop the native races of the territories concerned. In the case of the C. Mandates the people of Great Britain are already committed to a policy which is in fact the old annexation of conquered territory; but even in this case it is supposed that the League has a power of supervision, and the case of the Bondel rising in South-West Africa shows that League supervision may be necessary. As for the B. Mandates, the principles of government which we have accepted under the League are not very different from those already in use in the Nigeria. But the Labour Movement would desire a development of those principles. Good deeds already done are not excuses for complacent conservatism, but grounds for further progress. There is indeed every reason why other Colonies, not hitherto German, should be given the status of mandated territory, for we should then make it even more clear that we have no right whatever in such territories except as trustees; but it is not yet practical politics to suggest that we should be honest in carrying out our statement to the Germans that their colonies were not to be annexed, but to be mandates of an international trusteeship.

As for the A. Mandates, Irak and Palestine, the position is too unstable for a full statement of Labour policy here. Naturally Labour policy will have to take account of changes which may occur at any moment. We are not likely to retain direct British power of these countries for much longer ; but the whole situation in the Near East seems at the moment to be fluid. There is no detailed applications of principle in this matter which would be generally accepted by all sections of Labour.

One cannot escape implying some judgment on the mandated territories of other States ; and indeed since Great Britain is a member of the League, she is indirectly concerned with the fate of such territories. There are some difficult or at least uncomfortable issues in this matter. First, some jurists hold that Germany did not under the Peace Treaty give over her Colonies unreservedly, but only as Trusts under the League ; and if that is so, Germany herself still has some status in regard to these Trusts. Secondly, Allied propaganda urged as a reason for depriving Germany of her Colonies the bad government of those Colonies. But if bad government is a reason for depriving one State of colonies, what ground can there be for giving these colonies to another State whose record is worse ? Thirdly, if the Mandate system is to be taken seriously, it must be extended by international agreement to solve some of the coming problems of rival European Governments in Africa. It is perfectly clear that France and Italy are moving towards a serious clash in North Africa ; but Great Britain and other members of the League can quite well press for the consideration of such principles by the League, at least with reference to the Mandatory principle.

CONCLUSIONS

The dominant ideas in Labour policy are that the interests of all peoples of the world are in some ways the same, and that in case of conflict between private or group interests and those of the community, the latter must take precedence. This does not mean that we have a clear-cut plan to apply to every problem. It may well be difficult in particular cases to discover what are the common interests of all peoples or whether private interests do in fact obstruct the interests of the community. But the general principle is not weakened by the difficulty of applying it. Again, Labour is undoubtedly humanitarian, as the best Liberalism was, in its consideration

for less developed or less powerful peoples ; but Labour is none the less interested in adapting or, if necessary, reconstructing the system which gives rise to evils. It must not be imagined that the Labour Movement is concerned only with British wage-earners, although of course the Movement clearly holds that the interests of these wage-earners are much more important than the prestige of a social upper class or the success of traders and financiers. We give the respect due to financiers as to others, but they are comparatively unimportant. With such an attitude towards real politics it is easy enough to see the British Commonwealth of Nations in a new light, not as a flag-waving, drum-beating trade enterprise, but as the co-operation of many peoples all consisting in the main of quite ordinary, peaceful, labouring folk. No group of these has anything to gain from the loss of any other group ; and as the British Commonwealth is thus a brilliant and immortal example of the organisation of peace, so its experience and its goodwill may assist other nations outside the Commonwealth to achieve the difficult task of establishing the peace of the whole of humanity.

CHAPTER VI

LABOUR AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

BY W. W. HENDERSON

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Labour and a Super-national Authority—Labour's War Aims—Demand for the Establishment of a League of Nations—League the Keystone of the New Social Order—International Labour's Declarations—The Berne Labour and Socialist Conference—Draft Recommendations—Call to the Working-Class Movement in all Countries to stand behind the League—The Covenant of the League and Labour Amendments—Economic Government of the World—Suggested Functions of the Economic Section of the League—International Labour Charter—International Labour Organisation—Draft Labour Conventions—The First Labour Government and the League of Nations—Prime Minister's Pledge—Official Case for Admission of Germany into the League—The Geneva Protocol—Arbitration—Security, and Disarmament—Important rôle played by Labour Government's Representatives—The Dominant International Authority of the Future.

IT is curious that the Labour Party, which is the peace and international political party *par excellence*, should be suspected of being either hostile to or indifferent about the League of Nations. It is nevertheless true that many people have been inclined to accept the opinion that British Labour is lukewarm in its attitude towards this new and permanent supernational authority. Labour's vigorous denunciation of certain important provisions in the Treaty of Versailles, its criticisms of the composition, constitution, and limited functions of the League of Nations, and its active participation in the Labour and Socialist International are mentioned in support of the contention that the Labour Party cares very little about the League of Nations and is altogether unmindful of its enormous potentialities.

In point of fact quite the contrary is the case. Almost from the moment the project of a supernational authority entered the realm of public discussion during the War and before it

received the official and formal and perhaps unenthusiastic support of Governments, the British Labour Movement was an ardent and sincere advocate of the establishment of a representative Council of the Nations for the maintenance of the world's peace, not on the arbitrary basis of this or that particular Treaty, but by the peaceable composition of differences that might arise between nations and by progressive development as the result of positive constructive efforts towards the reign of universal justice and co-operation.

LABOUR'S WAR AIMS

In the closing months of the War the British Labour Party displayed a real practical interest in the terms of peace that a victory for the Allies was thought to make possible. In its "War Aims Memorandum" which was utilised for Government propaganda purposes under the title "The War Aims of the British People—An Historic Manifesto—British Labour's Reply to the Kaiser," it was declared that "Whoever triumphs, the peoples will have lost unless an international system is established which will prevent war. It will mean nothing to declare the right of peoples to self-determination if this right be left at the mercy of new violations, and was not protected by a supernational authority. That authority can be no other than the League of Nations; which not only all the present belligerents, but every other independent State should be pressed to join."

This position was taken up by British Labour not because of war-weariness but for definite positive reasons of practical policy. It regarded war as a destroyer of essential elements of an enlightened civilisation and realised that the perpetuation of the old conditions, which were the parents of hostility and war, would imperil if not render impossible of realisation by progressive stages its great and ambitious but eminently practical scheme of a New Social Order. Even from the standpoint of what has been called "enlightened self-interest," the forging of a powerful instrument of international pacification and co-operation was to be welcomed because it is indisputable that Britain and the British Commonwealth of Nations cannot be secure from war in a world at strife; prosperous in a world that is impoverished; orderly, harmonious, and contented in a world that is chaotic, predatory, and precariously balanced. In an atmosphere of international ill-will and leashed hostility, neither Great Britain nor other

nations would be able to embark upon great schemes of social and economic reconstruction which, urgent and important before the War, had become imperious and irresistible as the result of the world catastrophe.

Labour recognised that in a proposal for the League of Nations lay "the hope of deliverance for all the peoples from the severest economic pressure and the most terrible risks of suffering and loss, from heavy burdens of taxation to maintain large armies and navies." The specific programme of Labour, then formulated in what was called "The New Social Order" and since extended and elaborated in numerous official declarations, presupposed two essential conditions for the carrying of it into practical effect: the first was the speedy liquidation of the war situation: the second was the establishment of a League of Nations which would provide a common-sense way of settling differences between nations: the substitution of methods of discussion, negotiation, conciliation, and arbitration for reliance on armed force.

Dealing with the attitude of British Labour towards the League of Nations, the Right Hon. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Secretary of the Labour Party, wrote in 1918 that:

The project of a League of Nations is the keystone of the new social order that Labour desires to build. It stands also in the forefront of the Labour policy of international conciliation. Neither national reconstruction nor international conciliation is possible as long as the people are preoccupied with the menace of foreign aggression, and Governments are forced to spend huge sums yearly upon the means of national defence. In the past many necessary reforms have had to be postponed or altogether abandoned for this reason. Future Chancellors of the Exchequer will have a far more difficult task to raise the revenue necessary to meet the enormous charges arising out of the War; and if they have to impose heavy taxation for military purposes, the nation will be unable to bear the additional burden of expenditure involved in the great and far-reaching schemes of social reconstruction which the War has made imperative. If nations are to be forced to pay and continue to pay the blood-tax, even on the pre-war scale, it is useless to talk of reform.

In the circumstances and conditions that existed at the close of the War, not to be able to talk of reform and not to be able to carry through reforms meant running a grave risk of revolution, which occurred in many parts of Europe, sweeping with devastating effects across the whole continent.

In Inter-Allied, international, and national conferences the British Labour Party declared itself in clear and unmistakable terms regarding the proposed League of Nations. But it has always sought in the League of Nations, not so much an alliance of Governments as a parliament of peoples for altering the conditions which, if left unaltered, would lead to war.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR AND THE LEAGUE

Following the adoption in December, 1917, by the British Labour Movement, and in February, 1918, by an Inter-Allied Labour and Socialist Conference of the "War Aims Memorandum" aforementioned, a World Labour Conference was convoked at Berne, Switzerland, to be held concurrently with the official Peace Conference. This was really an invitation to the working-class movement to formulate their ideas of the foundation of a Peace Treaty and resume international relations, when it appeared that the decisions of the Conference would have the greatest influence upon the work of the official representatives who were drafting the basis of the world resettlement at Paris.

The report of the Commission on the League of Nations, which was unanimously adopted, stated that the League should be based on a real peace of justice, and be constituted of delegates from the Parliaments representing all the parties therein. All the nations organised on the basis of self-determination should be a part of it. Those who had not yet attained to that status should be encouraged and assisted to fit themselves for membership under the protection of the League. All the members of the League should have equal rights and equal duties. One of the first tasks of the League would be the prevention of new wars and preparations for new wars. The League would make arrangements for the settlement of disputes by means of mediation and arbitration. It would abolish all standing armies, and finally bring about complete disarmament. Until that time armed forces would be under the control of the League, which would also have the means of economic pressure at its disposal in order to enforce its decisions. The League would endeavour to prevent economic war, and, with that object, would control the imposition of tariffs, and be enabled to develop into an organ controlling the production and distribution of food and raw material throughout the world. The functions of the

League would include the establishment, development, and enforcement of an International Labour Charter. The Report of the Commission concluded by stating that :

The League of Nations is being created under the pressure of conditions brought about by the War. It may be feared that, when those conditions have lost their force, the capitalist rivalry between States will develop its former acuteness. The League will, therefore, only be capable of full development and be able to do justice to its great task if the working-class movement in all countries stands behind the League and exerts the necessary driving force.

It is thus clear that before the Covenant of the League of Nations was framed and before the International Labour Charter had been drafted, and while the official Peace Conference was meeting in Versailles, the British Labour Movement—and the International Labour and Socialist Movement—was keenly anxious for the setting up of an inclusive super-national authority with power to deal with a wide field of international questions, whether political, territorial, economic, or industrial.

AMENDMENTS TO THE COVENANT

Following the publication of the Covenant in 1919, a Special Congress, representative of both the industrial and the political wings of the Movement, was held in London, which considered and endorsed a series of resolutions welcoming the Covenant, summarising its provisions, but submitting a number of reasoned amendments to some of the main articles. These resolutions related to the Constitution, the composition, the functions, and the powers of the League. It was urged that the Body of Delegates should be chosen from the National Parliaments by some such method as Proportional Representation, so as to secure an accurate representation and reflection of national opinion. Each nation should have five representatives and have votes upon a graded system. It was proposed that the Executive Committee should consist of eleven members, including representatives from the five Allied Powers and from Germany and Russia, and that it should be so constituted as not to be independent of the Body of Delegates. It wanted the Body of Delegates and not the Executive Committee to regulate the activities of the League, and the International Secretariat to be under

the final control of the same body. A special demand was made for the immediate inclusion both of Russia and of the late enemy countries, a point which continues still to occupy a foremost place in the Labour policy concerning the League of Nations. A further demand was made that no armies should be raised by conscription, that the manufacture of armaments should be placed under the direct control of the League, as well as whatever forces were necessary for police purposes. As there can be no real security for Peace which does not include national disarmament, the Labour Movement called for a declaration to that effect to be included in the Covenant. As regards the International Bureau of Labour, a claim was made for the *direct* and adequate representation of Labour and that the interests of women should also be represented. One further important amendment was directed to securing that Article XXI should include a declaration that its final purpose was to secure freedom of commerce between nations.

It will be noticed that the most important amendments of Labour bear on the introduction of a more truly representative element into the machinery of the League of Nations, particularly the representation of minority parties. In effect, what Labour had in mind was virtually a Deliberative International Parliament. It desired to have every nation included and represented—Germany and Russia as well as the Allied and Associated Powers; and, further, it sought to secure that national representation was in accordance with the strength of political parties in the national Parliaments and a true reflection of the main lines of political opinion as expressed through the different parties in the national Parliaments.

ECONOMIC GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD

Then as regards the relation of the League to the economic government of the world, the Labour Party expressed its views in equally clear and reasoned terms. It was urged that "it is of the utmost importance, if the League of Nations is to be a reality and not merely an association of diplomatists, its economic structure should receive fully as much attention as its political structure. The League of Nations that is required is not merely an *ad hoc* association for the prevention of war by conciliation or arbitration, but at least the groundwork of a real system of international co-operation in peace as well as in the prevention of disputes." This means that the

economic functions of the League needed to be clearly defined, and that every effort must be made to preserve those forms of war-time co-operation, which were at once valuable and capable of being incorporated in the permanent structure of the League. It criticised the view that the Labour section of the League of Nations could be entirely divorced from any economic section that dealt with trading and economic questions generally. Labour questions could not be separated from questions of markets, and the only basis on which an effective Labour Charter could rest was that of international co-operation in the economic sphere as a whole.

Accordingly, the Labour Movement urged that the necessary functions of the Economic Section of the League should include assistance in the maintenance of credit, i.e. purchasing power in the various countries at such a level as would ensure (a) a fair allocation of supplies of materials, etc.; (b) stimulation of supply of important materials by promoting production in the various countries; (c) no unnecessary disturbance of world market conditions through a breakdown of purchasing power in a particular country owing to preventable causes. It should seek to prevent exploitation by trusts, operating in the world market, whether by interests concerned in production, transport, or distribution, and to control the operations of international finance and combines; regulate the granting of concessions in undeveloped countries and safeguard such countries from unfair exploitation or monopolisation by particular interests; secure the enforcement of international conventions, in the matter of the open door and other matters, and prevent their evasion by secret rebates, concessions, and the like. The Economic Section should also promote international economic conventions based on the widest possible measure of international co-operation, undertake the international allocation of supplies of which there was a shortage or which were in danger of being monopolised by any particular nation or interest to the detriment of others; and promote the formation of international conferences and councils in various industries and economic groups in order to secure the greatest possible measure of co-operation in each industry or group.

This brief statement of Labour's ideas regarding the functions of a real and effective Economic Section is not only sufficient to indicate Labour's thorough appreciation of the possibility of the League of Nations machinery as a whole,

but discloses a genuine and practical desire that it should be allowed to function over a very wide field. It cannot be too clearly explained that Labour's conception of the League of Nations was that it should be something more than a machinery of conciliation to prevent war; it should be, in the fullest sense of the term, international, and should deal with the whole range of world political, economic, and industrial problems, not merely with a view to preventing war, but in order to ensure progressive development on all hands by friendly co-operation among all nations. Labour has never allowed itself to be deluded into thinking that political, economic, and industrial problems can be shut off into watertight compartments as separate and unrelated problems. On the contrary, it has always realised the extreme difficulty of discovering where a problem ceases to be wholly political, to become wholly economic, or semi-political semi-economic. It is customary to speak of the political differences between nations or Governments, but as a rule these differences have their economic, industrial, or financial aspects, and it is only by the League of Nations machinery being sufficiently extensive and co-ordinated on all political, economic, and industrial questions that it is likely to be able to serve the broad and various purposes which demanded its establishment. All the proposals made by Labour regarding the League of Nations make it clear beyond all doubt that their one concern was to assist in securing for the world a machinery that would be capable and efficient and commensurate with the developing tasks that properly belonged to it.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CHARTER

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P., writing in *The Labour Magazine*, the official monthly journal of the Labour Movement, in July 1923, a few months before he became Prime Minister, declared that :

The only fragment of their (the statesmen who had made the Peace treaties) handiwork which Labour has felt itself bound to defend stands apart from the framework of the peace settlement: the Covenant of the League of Nations and Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles, under which the International Labour Organisation was established, belonged to an order of thought very different from that embodied in the other clauses of the treaty.

Part XIII of the Treaty was perhaps more in the nature

of what might be termed the special concession to the organised workers by the official statesmen at Paris. During the progress of hostilities the formulation and adoption of a Labour Charter had been held before the eyes of the workers as one of the aims to be realised as the result of a victory for the Allied and Associated Powers. When the Peace Conference got into stride the Right Hon. George N. Barnes, who had entered the War Coalition Government as a representative of Labour, was put in charge of the Commission appointed to deal with this particular piece of work, and other leaders, notably Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. J. H. Thomas, and Mr. C. W. Bowerman, travelled by special request from Berne in Switzerland, whither they had gone to attend the International Labour and Socialist Conference already mentioned, to Paris to confer with Mr. Barnes and others officially responsible for the framing of the Labour Charter. They were able to place before Mr. Barnes and his colleagues for embodiment in the Peace Treaty the text of clauses guaranteeing a minimum standard of life and work for the workers of all countries. This report of the Berne Conference Commission on International Labour Legislation had been elaborately and carefully prepared and was the result of close and cordial collaboration between the political Labour and Socialist Conference and an international Trade Union Conference which was sitting simultaneously in the same building.

The Berne Conference demanded that the League of Nations as one of its primary tasks should create and put into execution an International Labour Charter. It formulated its "minimum requirements," which had already been partially carried out in some countries, to be converted into a "code of international law" by the League of Nations. These minimum requirements related to the education and employment of young persons, Women Labour, Hours, Dangerous Trades and the Prevention of Accidents, Home Work, Right of Combination and Rights of Immigrant Workers, Emigration and Immigration, Legal Minimum Wage, Unemployment, Social Insurance, Seamen, Administration of Labour Laws, and concluded by demanding the setting up of a Permanent Commission with a view to the carrying out of the proposals made and to the further development of labour legislation.

While Labour was unable to secure all that it desired in the Labour Charter as it emerged from the Paris Conference

it did succeed in exerting a very real and substantial influence upon the official framers, and the official leaders of the Labour Movement, especially those from Great Britain who represented the most powerful and influential national working-class movement, felt that at least in respect of the Industrial Section of the Peace Treaty they had succeeded in promoting the interests of those whom they represented even beyond the point to which the official statesmen had been prepared to go. A Labour Charter was secured and an International Labour Office established under the direction of M. Albert Thomas, a leading French Socialist whom the workers felt they could trust to employ the new Organisation and the powers which had been conferred upon it to the fullest extent.

The work done by the International Labour Organisation since its formation has completely justified its establishment and the expenditure that has been involved. The results of its research and investigation work, the vast amount of valuable information on industrial and economic questions, the collecting, co-ordinating, and interpreting of data which it has been called upon to handle have won for the Director and his staff of expert assistants the goodwill and respect of the British Labour Movement. In addition there is the work of the several international Labour Conferences that have been held under the auspices of the International Labour Organisation, and the various Conventions concluded clearly indicate the value of the Labour Section of the Treaty and the machinery operating under it to the industrial workers of all countries. These Conventions have dealt with the eight-hour day, unemployment, the minimum wage for children in industry, employment of young persons and women at night, employment of women before and after childbirth, protection against lead poisoning, the use of white phosphorus in the manufacture of matches, the prevention of anthrax, the establishment of Government health services, the reciprocal treatment of foreign workers, the recruiting of unemployed workers, and the licensing of unofficial employment agencies. Other draft conventions and recommendations have related to the minimum age for the employment of children at sea and to several matters affecting seamen, to agriculture, the use of white lead in painting, the establishment of a weekly rest day in industrial undertakings, the minimum age of employment for trimmers and stokers, and the compulsory medical examination of young persons employed at sea. It is

only possible to refer partially and in summary form to the practical efforts of the International Labour Organisation, but even so it is ample to indicate the wide range of industrial problems that come within its scope. In many of the things referred to, the recommendations of the International Labour Office are in advance of the legislative enactments of individual nations, and the giving effect to certain draft conventions is proceeding more slowly than was hoped would be the case. But the fact remains, nevertheless, that already the workers of many countries are enjoying conditions of employment which have been improved in this or that respect as the direct result of the activities of the International Labour Organisation and the creation of a stronger international spirit in respect of industrial conditions. And although the Labour demand that "on the International Bureau of Labour, Labour should be directly and adequately represented" was not conceded, and Labour representation can only be secured more or less as an act of grace on the part of the national Government, and as part of the national delegation, the British Trade Union Congress has shown itself most earnestly desirous of utilising to the fullest possible extent the opportunities provided under the Peace Treaty and the new machinery which it created for assisting towards the raising of the conditions of employment and of life generally for the workers.

FIRST LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND THE LEAGUE

The existence of a Labour Government for nine months in 1924 provided the world with an opportunity to compare Labour's declarations of friendliness towards the League of Nations with its practical attitude when placed in a position in which it could exert influence for good or for evil. The League of Nations Assembly at Geneva took place while the Labour Government was in office and while Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The composition of the British delegation was itself an earnest of the faith that Labour reposed in the League. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald himself headed the delegation, which also included Lord Parmoor, head of the League of Nations Section of the Foreign Office, and Mr. Arthur Henderson, Secretary of State for Home Affairs, who has always been a very ardent adherent of the League of Nations.

In his opening speech, which made a profound impression upon all who heard it, Mr. MacDonald made a striking affir-

mation, personal and official, of his belief in the League. "The League of Nations," he said, "both as an organisation and as a spirit, is struggling under somewhat adverse circumstances, and I am here to-day as a pledge that the country I represent—Great Britain—will use every means in its power to widen the influence and increase the authority of the League of Nations." He continued that "If the future is to justify our confidence and happiness it will be owing solely to the deliberations, the negotiations, the work, and the agreement of the League of Nations." It is scarcely to be wondered at, therefore, that delegates from other countries who had attended every assembly since the formation of the League declared that Mr. MacDonald's utterance of sincere belief in the League of Nations had raised that body almost in a moment to a position of prestige and authority that it had never occupied hitherto. Proceeding to deal with the composition of the League, Mr. MacDonald regretted the separation of America from the League and expressed the hope that one day "America's own heart would incline her to come in." Germany could not remain outside the League of Nations. "The London Conference created a new relationship between Germany and the other European States, and that relationship should now be sealed and sanctified by Germany's appearance on the floor of this Assembly." Here was the first definite and official call for the admission of Germany into the League of Nations! And with reference to Russia, Mr. MacDonald hoped that the draft treaty between Russia and Britain would be the "first indication that the Russian Government is itself prepared to come in and be a part of the co-operating European system, and so, being here, to complete the authority and influence of the League of Nations." From the first Labour had demanded an all-inclusive League of Nations. At the first real opportunity presented the first Labour Government officially pronounced in clear and unmistakable terms for the completing of the League by the inclusion of Germany and Russia.

GENEVA PROTOCOL

The outstanding event of the Fifth Assembly was the framing of the Geneva Protocol to secure arbitration, disarmament, and security. Fifty-four Governments there represented faced the problem of organising the world for peace with the same conscious intention as they formerly organised for war. The delegates called upon to prepare "The Protocol

for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes" were faced with this position: without arbitration there could be no security, and without security there could be no disarmament. The Protocol seeks to provide what might be termed "Pooled Security." The system of comprehensive obligatory arbitration is coupled in the Protocol with a collective undertaking to apply the prescribed sanctions to any nation, within the League or outside, that enters upon aggressive war. The signatory States undertake to carry out in full good faith any finding that may be rendered in respect of a dispute and will comply with the solutions proposed. In the event of any State refusing to honour this undertaking and resorting to war, provision is made for the enforcement of the common decision in regard to the dispute. Disputes of a justiciable character are to be compulsorily referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice, while disputes which do not come within that category, or which the parties are unable to agree to refer to judicial arbitration, are to be dealt with by other methods of conciliation or arbitration. In this endeavour to frame a scheme which would afford no loophole for any State to provoke war without exposing itself to the moral condemnation of the world, it was necessary to define the term "aggressor" in such a way as to ensure that the whole scheme would not collapse under the test of experience. Accordingly it was laid down in plain and specific terms that any State will be presumed to be an aggressor, unless the Council shall decide otherwise, which (1) refuses to submit to the procedure of pacific settlement the matter in dispute; (2) fails to comply with a judicial sentence or arbitral award or with an unanimous decision of the Council; (3) violates any of the provisional measures enjoined by the Council whilst proceedings are in progress. Finally pacific and military sanctions are provided as a last resort; the final expression of the will of civilised society to punish the makers of war, should the moral, judicial, and arbitral determinations fail to restrain an aggressive nation. The Protocol having provided for security by arbitration opens the way to disarmament, which is the supreme need and desire of all enlightened peoples. The Protocol has still to be ratified by many Governments, including our own, but it represents the biggest conscious effort yet made in human history to outlaw war and to ensure peaceful progress and development for all nations. In its formulation the British delegation

played a primary part. And without in any way seeking to represent it as a party accomplishment, one cannot omit to cite it as part of the convincing evidence that Labour realises the value of the League of Nations and is prepared to make the fullest possible use of it for the pacification of the world and the peaceful reconstruction of its political, economic, and industrial life. The Protocol represents, so far as British Labour is concerned, an attempt to realise by Government action and authority one of the aims which both British Labour and International Labour expressed in 1919, when it was declared that the League of Nations would only attain its object if *inter alia* "all nations forming the League of Nations are obliged to submit all questions which may arise to the decision of the League, and bind themselves to accept these decisions and exclude recourse to war under any circumstances whatever." Progress may be slow towards the realisation of this aim. It will be a case of gradual progress step by step. The Labour Party know full well that "the mere creation of the League of Nations did not and could not of itself solve the problem of armaments or ensure international peace. Even if the League were endowed with a perfect Constitution, acceptable to the whole world, it would not be enough. The erection of a State or of an institution is but the first step in the fulfilment of its purpose, supplying not a solution of its problems but the means for their solution." The Labour Party believes in the League of Nations because, if it is allowed properly to function, it provides the means for the solution of all the varying kinds of international problems which can threaten the peace of the world, and it is a definite part of Labour policy to secure for the League the free and full exercise of the wide powers that should belong to a super-national organisation that is really intended to become a powerful and effectual institution. It has many and important weaknesses in its existing form; but it is not to be rejected on that account. Just as the Labour Movement considers that while the British Parliament has obvious weaknesses, is often cumbrous in its workings, and can on occasions, given the intention, be used to thwart the democratic aspiration of the community, it can be made the effective instrument of political and economic emancipation of the workers and an agent for promoting the general interests of the community as a whole, so British Labour holds that the League of Nations, yet to become complete, its spirit still developing and expand-

ing, and its vision broadening, will in course of time, given the right intentions on the part of the nations of the world, become the dominant and compelling International authority for throwing wider and still wider the boundaries of peace, freedom, and justice.

BIOGRAPHIES

JAMES KEIR HARDIE
THE FOUNDER OF THE LABOUR PARTY
BY THOMAS JOHNSTON, M.P.

THOUGH dead, James Keir Hardie yet speaketh. No man has exercised a more potent influence in the moulding and direction of the British Labour Party; and the distinctive characteristics of the Socialist propaganda in Britain, in contrast with the distinctive characteristics of the Socialist propaganda on the Continent of Europe and in the United States, are very largely the result of the impress and spirit of the best-known and most-revered leader the British working-class ever possessed. The broad tolerance of doctrine in the British Labour Party, the absence of cloudy metaphysics in its creeds, the strong dash of Puritanism in its programme and policy, are surely the attributes of the founder of the Labour Party, the poor Lanarkshire boy who became the prophet, priest, and patron saint of his class in the closing years of the nineteenth and the opening years of the twentieth century.

Keir Hardie's life-work was the building up of an Independent Labour Party as a Socialist instrument, and from the propaganda and enthusiasm generated by the Independent Labour Party to fashion a Labour Party, distinct from and independent of all other political parties, financed by working-class money, inspired by a Socialist ideal, and using its immediate political power for the remedying of the economic inequalities to which the working-class is subject.

James Keir Hardie was born on 15th August, 1856, in a single-roomed cottage near Newarthill, in the heart of the Lanarkshire coalfield, and was the eldest of a family of seven sons and two daughters. His father was a ship's carpenter who through the decline of his trade was frequently out of work; and so poor were the Hardies that at the time of the birth of her first child the mother was compelled to rise from her bed and go out to work in the fields to earn a few shillings

to provide bare food for the home. Keir Hardie's mother was a remarkable woman. Unable to pay for the schooling of her eldest son, she herself taught him to read; and indeed she taught him more than the art of reading: she taught him a certain habit of tight-lipped independence, a dour hatred of shams and hypocrisies, and such a contemptuous disregard for prejudices that could not stand cold criticism, as had a great formative effect upon his character, and kept him on the straight path in later life.

When he was but six years of age he was serving as message-boy to a Glasgow baker. His wages were four shillings and sixpence a week, and at the time he was the only breadwinner in the family. One of his brothers was ill with fever; the mother was ill, expectant of another child; and young Keir had to undertake night-nursing as well as his daily message work. Twice he was late—a few minutes only—for his work in the morning, and on the second occasion he was discharged. In later life Hardie remembered the bitterness and the tears and how the iron entered into his soul that day.

“I was discharged, and my fortnight's wages forfeited by way of punishment. The news stupefied me, and I finally burst out crying and begged the shopwoman to intercede with the master for me. The morning was wet, and I had been drenched in getting to the shop, and must have presented a pitiable sight as I stood at the counter in my well-patched clothes. She spoke to the master through a speaking-tube . . . but he was obdurate, and finally she, out of the goodness of her heart, gave me a piece of bread. . . . For a time I wandered about the streets in the rain, ashamed to go home where there was neither food nor fire, and actually discussing with myself whether the best thing was not to go and throw myself in the Clyde and be done with a life that had so little attractions.”

When Hardie got home, the bread given him by the shopwoman was still under his coat, but soaked with rain. “That night the baby was born, and the first of January, 1867, dawned on a home in which there was neither fire nor food.”

Two or three years later we find young Hardie working in the coalpits, often for twelve and fourteen hours a day. Once in an explosion he was almost left behind, and was only rescued in a half-dead condition; but by the time he was twenty-two years of age he was one of the best-educated

men in the pits, having acquired shorthand, a smattering of Latin and French, picked up from *Cassell's Popular Educator*, was acting as a Press reporter and as local secretary to the Miners' Union. At the age of twenty-three he married, and on taking a prominent part in a local strike (as he humorously explained in later life) as his honeymoon he was victimised by all the coal-owners in the district for months. During this period he and his newly wedded wife suffered great privation. Latterly he secured employment in a colliery at Cumnock and was elected secretary to the Ayrshire Miners' Association, a post he held for the next three years. Later he became president of the Ayrshire Miners' Union. In these, the early days of his Trade-Union activity, he was not a Socialist; apart from his Trade-Union work his public interests were absorbed in temperance propaganda—he remained an abstainer to the day of his death—and in propaganda work on behalf of the Evangelical Union, or Morrisonians, whose rejection of the sterner doctrines of Calvinism and insistence upon the gospel tenets of human salvation made a strong appeal to him. Occasionally, too, we find him below some Reformer's Tree or in some quarry-hole, haranguing audiences upon one or other of the planks in the Radical programme of the time. When Henry George came to Scotland with his eloquent appeal against private landlordism, none threw himself more heartily into the resultant crusade than did the young miners' leader from Cumnock.

By the time Hardie had become thirty years of age there was no real political organisation of the working-class. There was, of course, the Trades Union Congress, which, truly enough, passed resolutions in favour of this, that, or the other reform; but the reforms it envisaged were always expected as the fruits of Liberal Party electoral triumphs; the few Trade Unionists in Parliament were Liberal-Labour M.P.s, and more Liberal than Labour; there was simply no consciousness of any necessity for a working-class political organisation, much less of a working-class party independent of the other political parties and animated by Socialist ideals. The Socialist movement, such as it was then, could only be described as a reflex of continental agnosticism, republicanism, and what Bruce Glasier called "rebellism." But to Hardie had come the vision of a working-class party, yielding allegiance to neither Liberal nor Tory Party, financing and controlling its own candidatures and fighting for its own programme.

Perhaps at first he had no conception of anything beyond a group of active Labour Party M.P.s goading on working-class legislation and reform; a Labour Government would be outside his dreams; but even prior to the memorable by-election at Mid-Lanark in 1888, when, greatly daring, he stood as the first definitely independent Labour candidate in British politics, there was clearly in Hardie's mind the idea that any social reforms worth having could only come as the result of political pressure brought by the organised workers acting outside the Liberal and Tory electoral machines.

The struggle at Mid-Lanark marked an epoch in British politics. Here was not subservient Labour, cap in hand, but independent Labour which refused all overtures to withdraw from the contest. Even an offer by the Liberals of a reversion of the seat at the next General Election, with his expenses paid, if he would meanwhile stand aside, was refused with scorn by Hardie. He had set the idea of political independence before the workers, and although maligned, traduced, and slandered in the Liberal Press with almost savage ferocity, he polled 712 votes.

Two months later, in May 1888, the Scottish Labour Party was formed in Glasgow, with Keir Hardie as its first secretary, and in November of that same year, at the conclusion of an international conference held in London, the young miners' leader from Ayrshire declared for Socialism. Henceforth his life's work was, definitely, the creation of an Independent Labour Party with a Socialist inspiration, and an organised working-class which that Independent Labour Party could lead to victory. Four years later at the General Election he became M.P. for West Ham, with a majority of 1,264 over a Conservative opponent. During the election he declared that while he gave general assent to the programme of the Liberal Party, "as far as it goes," he reserved the right, "absolute and unconditional," to take whatever steps he cared, irrespective of the fortunes or discipline of the Liberal Party, to further the interests of the working-class; he added that he "intended to form an independent Labour Party," and indeed before the Parliament to which he had been elected had held its first sitting, the Independent Labour Party was formed, with Keir Hardie as its first chairman. Clearly and definitely the primary object of the new party was declared to be "the collective ownership and control of the means of production, distribution, and exchange."

And so Keir Hardie entered the House of Commons as a declared Socialist, and as the first Independent Labour Party—a party of one. How he lived in London and kept his home going in Scotland during this period is a mystery. He had refused two incomes—one of £300 a year from the Liberal Party war-chest if he would tie himself to the Liberal machine, and one of £300 a year from the Misses Kippen, two wealthy old Scots ladies, who were attracted by his Socialism and his nationalism. To the latter offer there were no conditions attached, and Hardie, who held his independence dear—and well perhaps for the Labour movement that he made almost a fetish of it—deeply offended the ladies by his blunt suggestion that if they had any spare money they could donate it, not to individuals, but to the new Scottish Labour Party. He had a small subsidy from the Ayrshire Miners, but he reaped little or nothing from his journalistic activities or from his oratorical campaigns; on the contrary, he was frequently out of pocket, and we find him assuring the Durham miners when he was forty-six years of age (in 1902) that he was “worn out in body and very, very sad in spirit. . . . If I were to die here and now, I would leave my wife and family a legacy of debt bigger than I care to think about.”

But the dour, covenanting fixity of purpose of the man and the intensity of his Socialist faith made short his periods of resignation and despair. His sadness of spirit was evanescent, and the perpetual raging, tearing campaigns of oratory among his “ain folk” in the working-class districts, night after night for weeks on end, and his every other waking moment absorbed in work for the *Labour Leader*, or in his Parliamentary duties and correspondence, prevented him from being overwhelmed, as any ordinary mortal might be excused for being overwhelmed, by the magnitude of the task to which he had set his hand. In Parliament, of course, he was an Ishmael. He was not merely shunned: he was hated. His speeches and writings roused all the class pride and passion of the aristocracy and the snobocracy; his steady insistence that those who did not perform useful work, but levied toll upon those who did, were but useless parasites whom it was his holy mission to sweep away, mightily enraged the middle class; the Press mocked, misrepresented, and caricatured him, and a privileged pulpit frequently slandered him.

Every now and again he literally lacerated the feelings of

a not-over-sensitive possessing class, as, for example, by his famous "Royal Baby" speech in June 1894. There had been a great mining explosion at Pontypridd, where 251 men and boys had been killed; on the same day the Duchess of York had been delivered of a son. To the Government of the day the latter event was the more important, and Sir William Harcourt moved an address of congratulation to the Queen; but not a word was said about the mining disaster. Hardie promptly moved an amendment to the address of congratulation, tacking on an expression of sympathy with the relatives of the miners and of detestation of the system which rendered these periodic sacrifices of life inevitable. The amendment was ruled out of order, but Hardie exercised his right to speak on the motion. The House of Commons yelled and screamed at him—Irish Nationalists and Radicals as well as Whigs and Tories. Hardie stood alone. Everyone rejoiced, so wrote Hardie in the *Labour Leader*, "in a subdued kind of way with the Duke and Duchess of York on the birth of their child, but it is to the sore-stricken poor of that Welsh valley that the true hearts of this great nation will turn with overwhelming sympathy. For the lick-spittles of the Press who have no ears for the cry of the poor widow and orphan, and who attempt to see in the birth of a child to the Duke and Duchess of York an event of divine significance to the nation, there can be nothing but contempt. The life of one Welsh miner is of greater commercial and moral value to the British nation than the whole Royal crowd put together, from the Royal Grandmamma down to this puling Royal Great-grand-child. . . ."

Such an one as the author of those lines was not born to popularity. Every possible outrage upon the sentiments of the "respectables" he committed in the course of his propaganda. By his persistence, indeed sometimes almost by his truculence and offensiveness, he, standing alone, made the plight of the unemployed workman a great parliamentary issue, and finally compelled a reluctant Liberal Government to set up a special Committee of Inquiry into the most effective way of finding relief. But, alas! he was defeated at the General Election of 1895 (by 775 votes), and most of the propaganda work he had been carrying on in Parliament was abruptly suspended. Not until the General Election of 1900 did he secure again a seat in Parliament. In 1896 he fought a by-election at Bradford, where he was heavily

defeated; and at the election of 1900 he was put up for two constituencies, Preston and Merthyr, being easily beaten in the former, but succeeding by a majority of 1,741 votes over the Liberal candidate in the latter, constituency.

These five years of absence from the House of Commons were marked by two important and outstanding events in Hardie's life—his fight against the South African War and the formation of the Labour Representation Committee, out of which grew the Labour Party as we know it to-day. The Independent Labour Party, led by Keir Hardie, stoutly opposed the South African War, as a capitalist, jingo adventure; but so great was the war-passion at the time (there had been many years of peace and men had forgotten!) that Hardie and other speakers on Stop-the-War platforms ran many narrow escapes of serious physical injury, one demonstration in the City Hall, Glasgow, at which Keir Hardie and Lloyd George spoke, being long remembered for the fierce rioting with which it was accompanied. In the Press Hardie was execrated, accused of being a Boer spy in the pay of President Paul Kruger, accused of singing hymns of joy at the news of British defeats in the field; and all manner of insensate idiocies of that kind were openly thrown at him by Press and pulpit, until he became hated in thousands upon thousands of working-class homes with great intensity and ferocity as one whose assassination would be almost a public duty! Hardie opposed the war alike on Christian and on economic grounds. To Hardie, a war which had its inception in capitalist expansion against small republics, and where there was not even the pretence of national defence against aggression, was the crime unspeakable, the sin against the Holy Ghost. Night and day, by tongue and pen, he declaimed against the adventurers whose policy of "birsing yont" had caused the war.

During the five years that he was out of the House of Commons he had visited the U.S.A. on a lecturing tour, and he had carried his Socialist message through all the industrial districts in Great Britain; he had frequently developed his skill as a journalist by his work on the *Labour Leader*; he was now, clearly and without challenge, the leader of the British working-class.

In the 1900–1906 Parliament the new member for Merthyr proposed the first definitely Socialist resolution ever moved in the House of Commons. He was seconded by Richard

Bell, the railwaymen's M.P., the only other Labour Representation Committee member in the House; but the resolution was talked out and never reached a division. It was in the following terms:

"That considering the increasing burden which private ownership of land and capital is imposing upon the industrious and useful classes of the community, the poverty and destitution and general moral and physical deterioration resulting from a competitive system of wealth production which aims primarily at profit-making, the alarming growth of trusts and syndicates, able by reason of their great wealth to influence Governments and plunge peaceful nations into war to serve their interests, this House is of opinion that such a condition of affairs constitutes a menace to the well-being of the realm, and calls for legislation designed to remedy the same by inaugurating a Socialist Commonwealth founded upon the common ownership of land and capital, production for use and not for profit, and equality of opportunity for every citizen."

Meanwhile in the Law Courts a decision had been given—the Taff Vale decision—which simply drove the general staffs and administrative officers of the Trade Unions into Hardie's camp. Where his incessant propaganda had failed to convince the Trade Unionists that their only hope of economic salvation lay in independent politics, the Taff Vale decision, which rendered the unions legally responsible for the actions of their individual officials and which made peaceful picketing a criminal offence, roused the workers as they had not been roused since Peterloo, and headed the whole working-class movement definitely towards a political Labour Party. At the General Election of 1906 Hardie's victorious following rose from one to twenty-nine members. The Labour Party had arrived; eighteen years later it was to govern the country.

Meanwhile the strain of his incessant propaganda—most weeks he addressed a dozen meetings—had begun to tell upon Keir Hardie's health. In the year 1902 he had been compelled to take a continental holiday rest after a breakdown; later he had undergone an operation for appendicitis, and although he was but forty-seven years of age and of sturdy build and abstemious habits, he never was quite the same man after the operation. He had given up the editorship of

the *Labour Leader* with its worries, transferring the ownership and control of his beloved offspring to the Independent Labour Party; and in other directions he was being relieved of toils and exertions. But the strain of fourteen years of nightly propaganda, frequently under depressing conditions—irregular food, long railway journeyings, financial embarrassment, and the nervous and physical wastage in platform and Press controversy—had left their mark, and he was compelled, willy-nilly, to take a long, extended tour of the world. In Canada he had a triumphal procession; but in India he was harassed by malicious Press fabrications, and the headlines of the Press at home shrieked for his compulsory expulsion from India as a reckless fomentor of sedition.

For a fortnight or so he was certainly the best-hated man in the British Empire, but the fury somewhat subsided when the Central News reported from India that “none of the papers here, either English or native, has taken much exception to his conduct, which is thought to have been on the whole quite proper and discreet, as becoming the honoured guest of the Maharajah of Mysore, one of the signatories of the loyal manifesto, and of several prominent officials.” Yet probably even to this day there are misguided people who pin their detestation of the Socialist movement in this country upon the frenzies of that vicious Press campaign when Keir Hardie was depicted as preaching another Indian mutiny! All that Hardie had done was to denounce the prohibition of the right of public meeting, and to say that the prohibition reminded him of Russia; the violation of Hindu women by Mohammedan rowdies reminded him of Armenia; and he had further declared that colonial government was the ultimate goal of the Indian people. His refusal to be bound by barriers of the colour line, and his frank and open expression of comradeship with every social and racial caste in India, though hateful to the Imperialists of his day, probably did more to save India for a free federated Empire than is even yet acknowledged.

Then Hardie went to Australia and New Zealand, where he was warmly welcomed, and to South Africa, where the vested interests in the gold- and diamond-mines which he had ruthlessly exposed during the war, and whose treatment of native labour and proposed employment of Chinese labour he had savagely attacked after the war, prepared everywhere a hostile public opinion for his reception. He was, as his

official biographer, Mr. William Stewart, has said, "the living symbol of organised labour," and the capitalists had hired gangs to follow him in South Africa, smash up his meetings, and prevent the propaganda of organised labour from spreading.

When he landed home at Plymouth he was met by a squadron of Press reporters, who, among other questions, asked him what he thought of his chances of election as Lord Rector of Glasgow University. Hardie had not the remotest notion of what the pressmen were talking about (he had been nominated for the office by the Socialist students of Glasgow University without his knowledge or consent), but it was typical of the shrewd Scots caution of the man that he answered his questioners in such a way as disguised the fact that he had never before heard of his candidature. The result, of course, was never in doubt. He was handsomely beaten by both Lord Curzon and Mr. Lloyd George, but he was immensely proud of the fact that 122 students had voted for him.

Back in the House of Commons he was soon a storm-centre again. Along with two other members of the House of Commons, Messrs. Ponsonby and Grayson, he had criticised severely the action of the Government in advising King Edward to receive a visit from the bloody Tsar of Russia. In retaliation, King Edward had given orders to erase the names of these three members from the lists of those normally invited to Court functions. The banned members were quite indifferent, never attending regal receptions in any case; but objection was taken by the entire Labour Party to this new method of exerting courtly pressure upon members of the House of Commons, and it formally decided to associate itself with Hardie, and resolved "that until his name is restored to such official lists, the names of all its members shall be removed from them." This declaration sufficed, and the names of the offending members were hurriedly restored to the lists.

The Independent Labour Party, like all other organisations, had its dissentient and disgruntled members, most of whom at that period were incited against Hardie and the other I.L.P. leaders by Mr. Robert Blatchford of the *Clarion* and by Mr. Hyndman of the Social Democratic Federation. The antagonism of these two gentlemen to Hardie appears now to the student of the Socialist literature of the period to have been based more upon personal antipathy than upon grounds of public or party policy. And Mr. Grayson, an eloquent young Socialist, who had been elected to Parliament as member

for Colne Valley, and who was being hailed by the Blatchford school as the future leader of a Socialist party against timorous, tortuous, enervated, vote-seeking, "old-gang" politicians like Keir Hardie, undoubtedly gave the now tired pioneer many sad and grievous moments. It was true, as he had always acknowledged, that if the I.L.P., as a Socialist organisation, associated itself politically with non-Socialist Trade Unionists to form a Labour Party, then there must inevitably be compromise; but to Hardie the mass movement was "the thing," and so long as the I.L.P. was free to agitate for Socialism and to enthuse the Labour Party with Socialist ideals, he could see no sense in an Ishmaelitish breakaway to form a Socialist Party, pure and undefiled from the touch of the industrially organised but non-Socialist workers. Time has reduced these controversies to their proper proportions, but undoubtedly while they lasted they sorely troubled Hardie. And it may not be out of place to note here that of the "pure, clean, and undefiled" Socialists who harried him, the majority ratted during the war years to the capitalist parties, while Hardie and his colleagues held steadily by the faith.

Twice in the year 1910 he was handsomely re-elected for the Merthyr division; but home politics were no longer his chief immediate concern. He had become scared and horrified at the intensive military preparations in Europe; the shadow of the great slaughter was over him as he wrote articles and made speeches warning his fellow-countrymen of the impending disaster. There was, he held, but one hope. If the workers of Europe could be organised sufficiently and kept in touch by an active International, they might paralyse war by a great strike. This international general strike as a specific against war became with him an *idée fixe* and he preached it everywhere, at home and abroad. But, alas! when the Great War broke out in 1914 and the International proved but a broken reed, the various sections following their national flags, and the leaders in many countries joining in the frenzied clamours of the hour and inciting the young to blood-lust, Hardie's hope and his heart were broken. "I understand," he cried, "what Christ suffered in Gethsemane as well as any man living." The cause in which he had spent himself had gone to pieces at the first crack of cannon; the international brotherhood of working-men was no more; nay, the organised political Labour movement of which he had been the prophet and leader had thrown itself into the

jingo stream, and many of its prominent men had accepted service "for the duration of the war" (and some for life) with capitalist party organisations. The *Daily Citizen*, the first Labour daily newspaper in Britain, which Keir Hardie was so largely instrumental in founding, deserted to the "enemy" and yelped in the bloodthirsty chorus. Hardie fell, not like Nelson in the hour of victory, but in the black hour of defeat when all seemed permanently lost. He died at Cumnock on 26th September, 1915, and whatever be the medical diagnosis, he died of a broken heart.

But he had not failed. The great causes for which he fought and pioneered were indestructible. The equality of the sexes and the enfranchisement of women—for these Hardie was the only front-rank politician who proclaimed his faith steadily in the days of the wild and unpopular "Votes for Women" crusade. Total abstinence from alcohol—all his life Hardie was a personal abstainer, and by precept and example sought to induce the working-class to organise themselves against "John Barleycorn." Socialism and human brotherhood—though apparently drowned in blood in the last dark year of his life, yet did the cause rise again like a phoenix from the ashes, and but eight years after his death the Labour Party he struggled to found was 140 strong in the House of Commons and voting as one man for a definitely expressed Socialist resolution; and still one year later that Labour Party was 192 strong and its leaders were seated upon the Treasury Bench and governing the country!

Yet the Labour Party would not have been in power in 1924 but for that short-statured, straight-backed, stiff-necked, grey prophet from the Ayrshire moors. "An uncorruptible man of the common people" he has been described by one who knew and loved him, and the description is not inapt; but he was more than that. In him the dour visionaries and dreamers of his native land, men who sacrificed themselves on the mosshags for a Cause, lived again after two centuries: sweeter a little, perhaps, for the added comforts and advantages of the age of science and invention, and fortunate that his prophetic austerities were softened by the laughter and humanity of his idol, Robert Burns. But Hardie's genius lay, happily for his class and his kind, in this: that he envisaged not only the ultimate goal, but the immediately necessary steps. He was no man of barren dogmas, boiling a myriad human impulses (and these often in mutual

contradiction) into a phrase ; he loathed the mental concept of a class war, and opposed those who sought to make it a test of faith in Socialism ; while he dreamed and preached the brotherhood of man, he organised the workers in the parish so that his dream might come true.

A working-class that can throw up a man like Keir Hardie is a working class that cannot be enslaved.

RT. HON. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD, M.P.

LABOUR'S FIRST PRIME MINISTER

BY MARY AGNES HAMILTON

ACCIDENT has made men Prime Ministers, here and elsewhere. In such cases, the office loses the dignity it should give. There was nothing of accident in the fact that James Ramsay MacDonald was the first Labour Prime Minister. He helped to create both the British Labour Party and the circumstances which gave it its chance; he restored to the post of the first servant of the State the dignity it was losing under his predecessors, just as he won back for his country, within six months, the respect and weight lost in the international sphere by the muddling and dishonesty of the six previous years. The great experiment is now over; Britain has reverted to Toryism, Labour to Opposition; but a mark has been made on our political development that cannot be effaced; a new stage registered in the advance of Labour and the conquest of its idea over the general mind. In great measure as the result of his work, a party whose birthday is little more than thirty years old has surmounted two crucial stages in its history—the stage of development into a national party, with an appeal wider and deeper than that of class, and the stage of demonstration of capacity to govern. Thus, within less than a quarter of a century, the instrument of Socialist transformation has been forged and fitted to its task.

In a very real sense, the history of the Labour movement in Britain, as in its international affiliations, is the biography of the first Labour Premier. Without Ramsay MacDonald, it is doubtful whether a Labour Government could have been formed: still more doubtful whether it could have succeeded in weathering the storms in which it was called to take the helm. Inside the party, his moral and intellectual ascendancy has never been questioned since the days when, as Secre-

tary of the Labour Representation Committee, he brought it into being. Inside the party it is realised that, during the shattering years of the War and its dark aftermath, he, more than any other, was responsible for holding it together, maintaining its fundamental unity as a working-class organisation, Socialist in ideal, political in method. In the case of every similar party on the Continent, this unity was sacrificed to dividing antagonisms born of war passion, with tragic results. In great Britain this fissure was avoided, despite the fact that Ramsay MacDonald himself, and the Independent Labour Party, whose spokesman he was, were more definitely pacifist, more critical of the War, than most Continental sections. It was avoided, not by any compromise on his part—he paid, to the full, the price of honesty and conviction—rather because he was always capable of looking ahead, of seeing, beyond the War, the peace that must follow it, when the social and economic struggle would have to be resumed and the ranks of Labour closed against reaction: and because the integrity of his own opinions carried with it a real tolerance of the sincerely opposed opinions of others. He was entirely prepared to sacrifice himself and his own career; he was not prepared to sacrifice the Labour Party, and all that it was to do in the future. He succeeded, with the loyal co-operation of Arthur Henderson and others, in holding it together, to such purpose that, in 1918, the new constitution of the party not only included, in one fold, the Socialist sections (Independent Labour Party, Fabian Society, etc.) and the Trade Unions, Trades Councils, and local Labour parties, but made provision for the direct affiliation of “workers by hand and brain”—thus completing the idea of a national party which he had mapped out in the days of the Labour Representation Committee. The same wise latitude, the same combination of firmness on principle, definiteness as to fundamental purpose, with toleration of individual difference, individual conscience, marked his leadership in Opposition; throughout, he has been able to carry the rank and file with him, to weld into one effective whole the widely differing elements of which the Labour forces are composed, and to draw new strength from their very difference.

Inside the party, this pre-eminent service has always been understood. The curious unreality which must, to-day, be registered by anyone who reads the records of the growth and development of British Socialism, written before 1924,

is due to a refusal or failure of the recorders to see this dominating and controlling influence of his. By attempting to leave him out, they give a picture, false in itself, which makes the events of the last two years strange and inexplicable. Actually, his personality is the thread upon which they are hung; take it out, and the story becomes incoherent and self-contradictory. Although the evolutionary Socialism of the I.L.P., from 1893 on, coloured and conditioned the growth of the Labour Party, it has not, to anything like an equal extent, coloured its literature, except through MacDonald's own writings. His writings have had a great influence; it is, however, not from them that one could expect to get a just picture of his personal share in the mental and actual evolution of the movement. For instance, his *A Policy for the Labour Party* (1921) while containing an excellent account of the work of the L.R.C., does not so much as mention the name of the secretary, to whose unremitting energy the success of that work was due. Other records show an interpretation of recent history tinged by a point of view antithetical to his, and an emphasis on those strains of thought—e.g. direct action, in its various forms—to which he was opposed, and therefore understate his activity. Anyone, for instance, who consults that otherwise admirable volume, the *History of British Socialism* by Max Beer, will find its latter part surprisingly out of touch with actuality, for this reason: there is in it no preparation for the developments of 1923 and 1924. In the extensive literature of the Fabian Society a similar interesting myopia can be detected. Accounts written from the outside, like the periodicals and newspapers of the time, go much farther in misdirection. There is a perverse ingenuity in belittlement and obliteration, of which the explanation must be that MacDonald was obscurely recognised as the most formidable champion of a new order of ideas: a man, therefore, whose work and influence it was desirable to conceal. During the War, of course, there was an active concentration upon him, designed to destroy his career, blast it with obloquy; after 1918, a more ingenious effort, conducted mainly through omission of reference, to persuade the public in general and the workers in particular that he had dropped out. This process was carried far. His name, for example, had only a very insignificant place, if any place at all, in the "shadow" Cabinets with which the Press amused its readers before 1922. Hence the indubitable

shock which his election as leader of the Opposition caused to the average, uninstructed newspaper reader.

Neither inside the party, nor abroad, was there any such "shock." There, it had long been recognised that there was one man in the party, and only one, who had in full measure the gift of leadership: who could use both the parliamentary situation and the situation in the country for all that it was worth; who, above all, had the long-range ideas demanded by a big crisis. Alone of the pioneers, MacDonald combines the attributes of fighter and builder, of enthusiasm and statesmanship. There have been men in its history more highly endowed for guerrilla warfare; none with the same comprehensive generalship or an equal grasp of Socialism as a principle of constructive action.

He used the instrument of Opposition, as he uses every instrument, with a purpose. The party was not there merely to demonstrate; it was there to do such useful work as could be achieved and, all the time, to make future government possible. No one anticipated so early a test as that of 1924; but, whenever it had come, the result was certain, because of the intelligent work that had been done. Mr. Baldwin's "discovery" of protection gave to the expiring fires of Liberalism a chance to unite in a transitory flame: to that extent, the nominal issue of the election was unexpectedly favourable to them. Behind that artificial issue, however, there was, opening out, the real struggle, between the forces making for Socialism and those ranged against it. MacDonald's leadership had, in fact, cleared unrealities out of the way and set before the nation a choice, of the most vital kind. Greater service can be rendered by no political leader than this of bringing before the minds of the governed the true problems underlying government. To do this, his whole energy had been dedicated, ever since he entered political life; this educational process, indispensable to the creation of a genuine democracy, had, throughout, been his first task. The War arrested but did not break his effort; after 1918 he had actively resumed it; throughout 1922-3 he was carrying it on, in the more effective theatre of Parliament, as well, as before, as on the platforms of the country. By November 1923 it was possible to drive home the fact that the election pivot was the question "Labour v. the Rest." So he told his fighting men, on the eve of the fight. From that fight Labour came back, numerically, the second

party still, but a second party before which there stood the opportunity of government. Sooner even than MacDonald had anticipated, the call was upon him. Was Labour to take its chance, entangled and hedged about with risks and difficulties, even dangers, as it was, or to make the great refusal? There is no indication that he hesitated for a moment. No one who knew would have expected him to do so. Cautious in detail, undramatic in method, and deeply averse to any kind of gesture, he nevertheless has always shown himself to be possessed, in supreme degree, of that highest virtue of man or politician, courage: that higher type of courage, moreover, which sees as well as acts, and never acts without seeing. He saw, then, as everyone sees now, that refusal would have spelt suicide: acceptance was demanded in the interests of the nation, no less than in the interests of the party. The party had something to give to the nation, and, in giving it, would serve both it and itself.

Since 1924 the justification of that decision has been plain to all the world. Since then the clouds of prejudice, distrust, misunderstanding, that had been assiduously assembled round the man who made it, have, to a very large extent, been dissipated. In inconceivably difficult circumstances, a minority Labour Government made good. Ramsay MacDonald himself has shown, in action, that the spirit of peace and goodwill, sincerely applied, can transform International relations. The experiment stands on record: a demonstration that cannot be wiped out, by which subsequent generations will learn to profit. In this peace work of his, as in the establishment of the fact that Labour could and did give Britain a more honourable, efficient, and public-spirited administration than the country has had for many years, he created an asset for the future service of Socialism which can hardly be overestimated.

Yet anyone attempting, to-day, to gather together the scattered threads of contemporary history has to realise that there was a time when this force was, as it were, lying latent in our political life: when there was danger that it might be wasted, in the sense of failing to achieve the full opportunity of use. Easy to see, now, that finely gifted as he proved himself for opposition, for the brave conduct of a losing fight, for the championship of vital ideas, derided and rejected by the many, Ramsay MacDonald is built, in all his attributes, for government. His power of work, his quick-

ness of insight into the heart of a problem, his unique courage in taking responsibility, his comprehensive candour of outlook, his wide and sane experience, and, above all, his genius for action, design him for that. To see the other side, too, may be a temporary drawback to the chieftain of a faction; it is vital to the statesman, speaking for his country as a whole. Had MacDonald been removed from active politics in 1922, these larger qualities might never have been disclosed to the general view. Those who had met and read him would have known that he possessed the ideas: they might, however, have remained in doubt as to whether he united with the vision of the philosopher the practical talent of the statesman. Now, by an inevitable contrary process, it is less generally perceived that his great gift to the movement and the nation is not so much this sagacity in dealing with the immediate, as the sure grasp of principle that controls and guides it. It is from this point of view that it is important to read his writings, and to remember the facts of his career, in its earlier, difficult stages. Continuity of conviction—that is the secret. No man was ever less what Robert Owen called a “creature of circumstance”. 1914–22—those eight years are there to show how little difference success or failure could make to the activity of a man animated by that obligation of service which he sees as the key to the more scientific organisation of the future. At the cost of what looked like a mortal sacrifice, he kept the standard of truth and sanity, decent feeling and straight thinking, flying through the war years, just as between 1918 and 1922 he saved the idea of political action from falling into utter disrepute. He wrote some of his best books (among them *Parliament and Revolution* and *Socialism—Critical and Constructive*) in this period of exclusion from the public eye.

“Events,” he has himself said, “mark your road: they do not indicate the purpose of your journey.” Of their writer these words are certainly true. The purpose of his journey is to assist in the transformation of society, in accordance with a truth discerned by his intellect and accepted by his heart. External events neither have, nor could have, deflected him from it. He has influenced other people greatly; he has been little influenced by them. The characteristic, reformist bent of British Socialism is largely his work. Between his earliest writings and his latest actions there is no gap; they are linked by the strong yet elastic continuity

of conviction. He is following, now, the course which anyone who has studied the expression of his ideas could have foreseen: not in detail, of course, since that takes account of the special circumstances of the present, but in its respect for facts, its acceptance of the conditions. He is no rigid doctrinaire: views derived in the first instance from the study of science have been reinforced, modified in detail by history and experience; but the conviction behind them has never faltered. He is an idealist, in the sense that he works towards, and in the light of, an idea: a realist in the sense that he never loses sight of the actualities through which that idea has to work its way. About that idea there is nothing remote or inhuman. It is connected, at every point, with common experience. Although he never "talks down" to his audiences, he talks to them, not above their heads. Seldom has a man with such trained distinction of intellect kept, so easily and naturally, his close contact with the mass. His belief in democracy is no theory: it is a practical and practised fact. No doubt the admixture in him of the artist accounts for something of his hold over audiences; he makes them see, as well as think: but the most remarkable thing remains his power to make masses of men think. He uses the familiar images, and lifts them out of the commonplace by a sudden touch. Two instances of this may be given. The first is at the close of a speech he made at the Labour Party Conference in 1919, to a resolution urging the party to initiate a movement for winning popular support for a policy of Treaty revision and the securing of a peace of reconciliation:

To-day, as I read about the Peace, as I hoped and prayed about the Peace, I thought of the almost countless graves scattered in the centre of Europe. Many of our children are lying there. It must be in the hearts of all of us to build a fair monument to those men who will never come back to bless us with their smiles. Do they not want a grand and magnificent monument built for them so that the next generations, even if they forget their names, shall never forget their sacrifice? That is what I want. I almost felt I heard the grass growing over them in a magnificent, soothing harmony, and that simple soothing peace of the growing grass seemed to grow louder and more magnificent until the riot and distractive sound of the guns was stifled and stilled by it. Can we not have that sentiment to-day, that feeling in our hearts? Can we not go in imagination to where our children lie, and feel that, in Europe, in our own hearts, that same peace shall rule, and

through sorrow and through sacrifice we shall obtain that wisdom and light which will enable Europe to possess peace for ever ?

The second is in the message sent out, as Prime Minister, on Empire Day—an occasion of peculiar difficulty, for anyone who would fain avoid the bathos of the commonplace. After expressing thanks and greeting to the Dominions from the Homeland, he said :

The parent tree is still green, and the sap of high endeavours still swells in its branches. In the generations that have gone, we have launched our exploring ships on many a venturesome voyage and to-day our people, our institutions, our traditions, and our methods, are to be found all over the earth. Our days of voyaging are not over. The world of mind and idea lies around us in unexplored tracts more vast by far than this earth was to our seamen, and the Commonwealth of Nations centring in this Motherland still hears the call to go out in an Elizabethan spirit of gallantry and doughtiness in search of liberty, justice, and peace.

The image is lifted, and used to light long trains of thought, that go on in the mind, fructifying after he has ceased to speak. This is not accidental : it is constant. The natural magic of his voice, the pictorial quality of his appearance, help to enable him to produce effects, by statements that never travel beyond the possible, such as other speakers can reach only by extravagance and hyperbole ; thus, it is true to say that his words have consistently educated, instead of merely exciting, his hearers. He respects their minds, and calls on them to work.

The incidents in the career of an individual, self-determined, to so high a degree, have only a secondary importance ; the true story of Ramsay MacDonald's life is the story of his character. Nevertheless, they have their interest, since both in its origin and in its circumstances that career is a mirror of the party he leads, while his complex personality, individual as it is, contains in solution the elements that have made the party at once a different thing from any continental Socialist party and an essential and probably dominating force in the International movement.

Like at least half of the members of his Cabinet, he was born into poverty, and only escaped from it by his own energetic will. Like so many of the ruling spirits in British politics, he is a Scot. Lossiemouth, where he was born in October 1866, was then a poor fishing village, on the edge of a rich,

agricultural country. Morayshire, on whose high sea-edge it perches, is rich in historic association, and possesses a rare natural beauty—that expanse of sky over wide fields, that has bred the great mystics; a sweep of coastline, fringed with golden sand, often compared with the Bay of Naples. A race very different from the Neapolitan grows in that tonic air. Ramsay MacDonald no doubt owes the tenacious and recuperative energy which has carried him, with unimpaired vitality, through a strenuous life, to the fact that his childhood, though poor in the extreme, was passed out-of-doors, and that he has never since given up the habit of exercise. The main influences that built the mind of this son of a poor farm labourer were the talk and precept of two remarkable women—his mother and grandmother—and the teaching of the Dominie of the school to which he trudged daily, at Drainie. That Dominie taught him well and implanted permanently in his receptive mind the idea of discipline in study and in action. When, first in all his classes, he left school at thirteen, went to work in the fields, and, in despair of the narrow opportunities of Lossiemouth, thought of going to sea, his old master called him back to school as a pupil teacher. He dreamed of making a minister or professor of the bright, brown-eyed boy, whose appetite for scholarship was so voracious. The boy's own ideas, however, were set in another direction. He had read Hugh Miller (later he was to say that no book influenced him so deeply as his *Schools and Schoolmasters*), likewise numbers of Cassell's *Popular Educator and Science for All* as they came out, and his mind had been stirred by scientific conceptions; above all, by the idea of evolution. Biology was the key then unlocking new doors; the master-notion of the age; and his fingers felt for it. Reading with impassioned energy, he prepared himself for science examinations. At the same time, he was a leading spirit in the local political scraps; led the loons of Lossie in raids on the Tory stronghold of Elgin; wrote stories and articles, earned his first shillings by a story that won a prize in a newspaper competition. Soon, Lossie had no more to give; he had read all its books, mastered its geology and history, understood the lessons of its hard economics. An advertisement took him south, on a wild-goose chase; undaunted, he set forth again; at 19 he was walking the streets of London, looking for a job. When, at last, he secured one, as an invoice clerk, in an underground cellar, at a wage of 12s. 6d. rising

to 15s. a week, he felt he had arrived. "I thought far more of that at the time," he wrote twenty years later, "than I did subsequently of getting into the House of Commons." The little account he once wrote is worth quoting, as indicative of a good deal in him :

From nothing to 15s. a week is a great success, though most people may not believe it. That year was a great triumph for me, for I not only lived on 15s. a week and clothed and fed myself, but I also paid certain college fees at the Birkbeck, the Highbury Institute, and the City of London College, etc., and I saved enough money to go home for a holiday in the north of Scotland. How did I do it? Well, I solved the problem of how to live on 6d. or 7d. a day. I often bought my food myself in the street markets in the neighbourhood of King's Cross and the Angel. Such luxuries as tea and coffee were beyond me, but I soon found that hot water was every bit as good as tea as a food, and it is quite as palatable when you once get used to it.

Hard work and insufficient food took their toll, however. On the eve of sitting for a scientific scholarship, his health collapsed. Hopes of a scientific career had to be abandoned. Another line of work called him. He had joined the S.D.F. almost immediately on his arrival in London, and soon was a member of the Fabian Society and of the London Trades Council, of which his namesake, James MacDonald, was secretary; though in none of these associations did he find quite what he wanted. At an open-air meeting in Regent's Park a day or so after he had for the first time seen John Burns (in the dock at Bow Street) he made his first speech. "That meeting was the first one at which I ever spoke, and I suppose it was a success, as I was asked to speak again on the following Sunday. That began my work for the Socialist movement in London. It was a queer, insignificant movement then, doing most of its work in the open air or in poky little halls." Some perhaps of those who heard this remarkable new-comer (his face struck an artist who heard him in one of the "poky little halls" so much that he made a drawing of it to serve as illustration of the hero of a popular novel by William Black, *Prince Charming*) guessed that he was destined to lift it out of the "queer, insignificant" stage. He spoke for Socialism both in London and the provinces; meantime, he was completing his equipment for real politics by serving (1888-92) as private secretary, at a salary, £75 per annum, which then spelt wealth to him, to a Radical

candidate, Mr. Thomas Lough. Reading and study, pursued with consuming energy, made him more and more effective both as speaker and writer; when he left Mr. Lough, he was able to rely on earning a living by his pen. For a time he wrote regularly for Radical papers, for in these years Socialists still believed in the Liberal Party—mainly because, politically, there was nothing else to believe in. But MacDonald grew less and less satisfied both with Liberalism, and with Trade Unionism, in its then phase; so soon as a chance came to concentrate on Socialist politics he seized it.

In 1888 he had sent not only the official good wishes of the London Scottish Home Rule Association (of which he was secretary) but his own, to Keir Hardie, standing for Mid Lanark. In 1894, the year after the foundation of the Independent Labour Party, he again wrote to Keir Hardie to place his services at the disposal of the I.L.P. Its foundation is, in fact, the crucial date in the political history of Labour. The object of the party was to bring the Trade Unions into politics, as an independent Labour Party, and to convert them, and the general opinion of the country, to Socialism. In this work Ramsay MacDonald proved one of its most powerful agents. He was not present at the original Conference in Bradford which drew up the constitution, but his agreement, as he has since stated, would have been complete with the arguments that led to the christening of the party with the name it bears. "The object of Socialists who are active in politics," he wrote in 1909, "ought not to be to form a Socialist Party, but a party that will journey towards Socialism. . . . Socialism is a view of what society is to be when it has completed a further stage of its existence; a political party embodies working ideas for immediate activities."

The view here suggested he has consistently held. To understand his attitude, then and now, it is necessary to remember that his approach to politics was along the pathway of science. The dogmatism of the S.D.F. was as alien to that point of view, on the one side, as was the Collectivism of the Fabians, on the other, to his democratic humanism. Marx had made a great, historic contribution: he had not said the last word in the analysis of an evolutionary process, there is no last word. The natural and bitter revolt of a gifted young mind, imprisoned in an organised society which denied scope to his aspirations, and above all, to his moral aspirations, was, from the first, directed and controlled by an

orderly, connecting, and trained intelligence, to which biology gave its characteristic bent. No biological student can accept the notion of cataclysmic change. That is not how things happen. Finding the truth of Socialism inherent in the facts of human association, he saw it moving progressively to full expression, in proportion as the mind of man became conscious, an alert co-operator with it. Socialism is inevitable only if intelligence makes it so. Intelligence is a principle of freedom, and of individuality; and freedom was in the lifeblood of this thinking Scot. Freedom is, moreover, the condition, as well as the rule, of progress. Freedom for nationality is the path to Internationalism, and can only be fully realised by it; freedom for individuality, crushed out under Capitalism, depends upon Socialism. But Socialism can be no class movement. "It is the whole of Society and not merely a class in society that is developing towards socialism. . . . The class struggle is far more akin to Radicalism than Socialism." "Socialism is a movement of opinion, not an organisation of status. It is not the rule of the working-class: it is the organisation of the community." As biology shows a progression from rudimentary to developed forms of life by a series of gradual transformations and adaptations, so social forms are destined to pass through certain stages to that complete political and industrial democracy, that full realisation of the fact of community, which is Socialism. The final aim conditions the immediate steps, but finished Utopias, erected here and now, caricature rather than express the ideal. "One step enough for me."

With these ideas in mind, he at once threw himself into active work for the I.L.P. In the 1895 election he carried its standard as candidate for Southampton. An unsuccessful but gallant fight was followed by an illness, and by another, happier circumstance, his acquaintance with Margaret Ethel Gladstone, daughter of a distinguished physicist and niece to Lord Kelvin, whom in the autumn of 1896 he married. A singularly happy and beautiful comradeship enriched his life, and widened and fortified his political work. As a member of the L.C.C. as well as by a series of journeys abroad, extending, later, to America and the Dominions, he completed his equipment, and was ready for the big job that came along in 1899. In that year the Trades Union Congress moved at last. The Labour Representation Committee was formed and Ramsay MacDonald appointed as its secretary. That the

L.R.C. became the Labour Party was due to him. In the Trades Union Congress there was then, and remained for long after, a distrust of political action, and a narrowly suspicious attitude towards what were called at the time "dilettantes" in politics: nowadays, "intellectuals." Repeated efforts were made to exclude from delegation all save those actually working at their job; there was a fear of Socialism, a hankering after the "safety" of the Liberal-Labour alliance. Many even of those who endorsed the appointment of the L.R.C. hoped that nothing would come of it, hoped that its nomination would stave off action. Their hopes were doomed to frustration when MacDonald became secretary. Within a very short period of time it became apparent that the selection of MacDonald as Secretary had provided the new body with exactly the kind of leadership to ensure its progress and success. Ramsay MacDonald meant business, and the L.R.C. soon became the most active organ of the movement. The 1900 (khaki) election did not, of course, help matters; fifteen candidates were run as Independents, the secretary himself standing for Leicester, where he had got a most energetic I.L.P. branch going; but only two, Keir Hardie and Richard Bell, returned. In 1901 the Taff Vale judgment roused the Trade Unions from their apathy, compelled them at least to see the need of political representation. In the next year D. J. Shackleton was returned at a by-election on the L.R.C. ticket. But against the three L.R.C. M.P.s there were 9 Liberal-Labour in the House; the three did not act together; in 1902-3, their chairman, R. Bell, at successive by-elections, supported Tory and Liberal candidates, as "good fellows." This sort of "independence" gave Ramsay MacDonald his chance: and at the Newcastle Trade Union Conference political independence was definitely asserted. Meantime, the I.L.P. was gaining ground in the country; the war spirit was dying down; hard work in organisation and propaganda was bearing fruit. The 1906 election came; of the 51 candidates of the L.R.C. 29 were elected. MacDonald himself was in for Leicester with a vote of over 14,000. The Committee had become a party, and assumed the status of a party. At the same time, it broadened its basis by admitting not only the Trade Unions and Socialist societies, but allowing for the affiliation of local Labour committees, composed of Trade Union and Socialist (I.L.P.) branches. The Labour Party was thus, from 1906 on,

organised on a national, not a sectional basis. Throughout its early stormy years MacDonald was secretary; subsequently, and still, treasurer.

This creation of a national party was a big forward step; to make of it a party "that will journey towards Socialism" required both its own education and the education of opinion outside. As chairman of the I.L.P. from 1907-10 MacDonald did his full share of educational propaganda, both by speech and pen, inside and outside the House of Commons, where he rapidly and surely made himself felt. He was responsible for editing the Socialist Library, in which he himself wrote two of the most effective volumes—*Socialism and Society* (1905); *Socialism and Government* (1909). In 1911 he published *The Socialist Movement*, one of the most successful volumes in the Home University Series; a year before, he had recorded his thoughts and experiences in India in *The Awakening of India*. With Keir Hardie, he represented British Socialism in International Congresses, and, like Jaurès, championed the evolutionary against the revolutionary view. In the House of Commons he was one of the very few who understood and cared about foreign policy, conducted by Sir Edward Grey almost wholly in the dark. He criticised him notably in relation to the Anglo-Russian Alliance and Persia, and on the French Entente, and warned the country of the dangers to which his foreign policy was heading. He made the membership of the I.L.P. at any rate definitely internationalist and pacifist.

In 1911 he succeeded Keir Hardie as leader of the parliamentary party, then 40 strong. In the House of Commons the situation was difficult; it grew more difficult after 1911 when the Liberal Government found its reform programme blocked by the House of Lords, and Labour had to choose between supporting them, till the Parliament Act was through, or letting in the Tories, to sweep away all that had been secured in the way of social legislation. A party of 40 can act as a gadfly; but to have acted thus, in the actual circumstance, would have been to sacrifice the workers. The controversy over the contributory principle, in the Insurance Act; the Women's Suffrage agitation, with all the tactical problems it involved, added complexities. The parliamentary position was one hard to make intelligible to the mass of workers outside. The years between 1911-14 were to some extent years of political reaction. Disappointment with Trade Unionism

had helped to create the Labour Party; disappointment with the Labour Party, in these years, encouraged new forms of industrial propaganda. As leader of the party in the House of Commons, MacDonald had to meet the same sort of criticism that the late Labour Government is meeting now—criticism which while in part just, often leaves out the governing circumstance—Labour in a minority. From 1911–14, it was a very small minority, inside which very different views as to the possible rate of progress prevailed, as now. Then, the old Liberal-Labour elements on the one hand, and the newer I.L.P. on the other, were very imperfectly fused. How imperfectly, the crisis of the war showed.

The speech which MacDonald delivered on 3rd August, 1914, after Sir Edward Grey's declaration that Britain was bound to France by an "obligation of honour" was an agreed statement, on behalf of the party. They did not accept the inevitability of war. "If the nation's honour were at stake, we should be with him." But there was no question of that. On the facts, "I think he is wrong." There had been a war in their experience; the South African War. "I have been through that before, and 1906 came as part recompense. It will come again." It did—in 1922. But between that and 1914 lay years whose darkness the speaker could hardly foresee. He was unafraid, however. "The feeling of the House is against us." Nevertheless, "we are going to go through it all. . . . Whatever attacks may be made on us, we say that the country ought to have remained neutral." Even as he spoke, MacDonald perhaps knew that already not only the feeling of the House, the feeling of the country, but the feeling of the greater part of the party was going against him, was swaying under the powerful influence of herd passion. He had been present at many of the governmental colloquies of the previous days. He had rejected, on his own behalf, the opportunity of going in, being a member of the War administration, and rejected with it certain popularity, immediate acclaim. The alternative, which he chose, was personal ruin. He knew that the War would be popular; he believed it would be long. Lord Morley had told him that the White-book would "blow the pacifists out of the water"; he had, however, also told him that nothing like the whole truth was in it. His task was to hold on to the truth as he saw it, whoever clamoured on the other side. On the morning of 3rd August he had held the Labour Party to his view, On

the day after the Ultimatum to Germany, there was a break away; defeated in the parliamentary party meeting, he resigned his leadership, to be succeeded by Arthur Henderson. A few days later the Executives of the parliamentary party and of the Labour Party agreed to take part in recruiting. The split was complete. The four other I.L.P. M.P.s (Keir Hardie, F. W. Jowett, Tom Richardson, and, when he got back from Australia, Philip Snowden) agreed with MacDonald; with them stood a handful of Liberals who soon came over to Labour. Only they.

To tell the story of the war years is not here needed. Two points only should be made, explanatory of MacDonald's part. Throughout that time, he had two main objects before him. First the mind of the party must be kept clear and clean; the policy that had produced the War must be exposed and understood, partly that truth should prevail, partly that a decent peace should be secured as early as possible. Second, the party itself must be held together, for the sake of peace and for the sake of Socialism. The essential difference between his attitude and that of his average fellow-countryman was that the latter submerged his mind in the War, accepted it as a thing given, whose moral offspring he became; J. R. M., on the other hand, knew that war, however comprehensive in its range, is an incident only in political development—a tragic, disastrous, but not final incident. There was life after the War, thought after the War. Militarism is poisonous not only in the blunting of human feeling, the release of the lower, animal instincts in society, which it causes, but in the arrest of thought which it allows and encourages. The official view was that to think about the War, its origin, its conduct, or its end, was “unpatriotic”; all that was required was “to get on with it.” MacDonald disagreed. Much easier for him, his personal protest made, to have kept silence. Silence, however, was treachery. The War had come about largely because, in the years from 1906 to 1914, foreign offices had hidden from the people, to whom they were responsible, what they were doing; it had happened because people did not, were not allowed to, think. It would happen again, unless they thought and understood—understood, above all, the root fact of international solidarity. Moreover, it would end in disaster—not the disaster of defeat, but the greater disaster of injustice. In these views, the I.L.P. stood with him. From 1914 he spoke and wrote, despite vilification.

abuse, and at times, personal danger, and so secured some degree of freedom of speech, and kept the peace mind alive. The I.L.P. grew, as men and women sickened of the horrors of the War.

At the same time he was incessantly concerned to prevent an irretrievable division in the ranks of Labour itself. Unless the workers had a party to fight for them, they would be sacrificed by the forces of Capitalist reaction, now and hereafter; if the Socialist ranks were split, reaction might triumph for half a century. At the first Labour Party Conference after the outbreak of war, at Bristol in 1916, he spoke in this sense, opposing a resolution which endorsed the actions of the Government, but urging that the party should not forget the obligation to fight united against the common enemy after the War. In 1917 (Manchester) he appealed to the Conference to strive to assist towards a meeting of the International :

They must remember that there had been a very important German Socialist minority that had never associated itself with German methods, that had representatives in gaol, that had fought for internationalism at the very darkest moments. Every Socialist section in the world, whatever its views might be, and however divided it might be, would feel no reluctance, when peace came, to acknowledge how much it owed to Liebknecht, Bernstein and the others, for what they had done for International understanding. Secondly, do let them remember that if Labour was to have anything whatever to say in the settlement, Labour must speak.

On both points he was defeated; on the second, however, the Stockholm Conference attempt proved the means of beginning that reunion of the divided forces of Labour. In 1919 he carried the whole Conference with him in condemnation of the Peace Treaties.

The 1918 Election was dominated by war passions, and driven by the press campaign of malignant falsehood. Mr. Lloyd George promised to make Germany pay for the whole cost of the War and tried to paint the Labour Party with the red of Bolshevism as well as the black of treachery. These two bogies were, indeed, well planted in the public mind; even in 1925 they are not wholly eradicated. In place of any intelligent criticism either of MacDonald or his party, they are raised again. In 1918 they ensured the defeat of practically every candidate who stood on a peace platform. Although the party came back 57 strong, the I.L.P. section was almost wiped out: MacDonald in Leicester, Snowden

in Blackburn, were rejected by huge majorities, after campaigns of misrepresentation that register the low-water mark in British political fighting.

The years between 1918 and 1922 were the most difficult in MacDonald's career, and as severe a test of character, in their way, as the more tragic four that preceded them. A parliamentarian by conviction and aptitude, he was outside the House of Commons; inside it, the weakness of the Labour Party threatened to arrest the tide of sympathy moving in its direction among those who were horrified by the Peace Treaties and their fruits, and the chicaneries of the Coalition. Outside, again, this weakness helped the growth of new "direct action" propaganda, which found, for a time, ready soil in the miseries of the post-war slump. It looked as though the Labour Party had only been preserved intact through the shocks of war to succumb to a new, internal split. From the first, Ramsay MacDonald had rejected Marxian Communism; the attempt to transfer Russian experiments to totally different British conditions was intolerable to his historically educated mind and repugnant to his Socialist democracy. Bolshevism had its roots in violence and class dominance; he disbelieved in both. The revolution for which he had always worked was to be accomplished by men's minds, not by bayonets, in whatever hands. Busy in attempting to reconstruct the Second International, he was, from the first, an outspoken critic of the attempted tyranny of Moscow, which replied by putting him on the Index. He fought it at Berne (1919), Amsterdam, Paris, Berlin. Though the Communists signally failed to capture the I.L.P., in 1920, and, in 1921, left it, the I.L.P. disaffiliated from the second International, while MacDonald was acting as secretary of its Committee of Action, and joined the Vienna (Reconstruction) Union. Nevertheless, his influence and efforts gradually prevailed, and his resistance to Communism, which at first looked like consummating his destruction, actually proved a means of consolidating the Labour Party itself. After the Woolwich by-election (March 1921) when the Communists held meetings in opposition to his candidature, and to that extent assisted in the efforts of Horatio Bottomley to secure his defeat by a narrow majority, Communism, as an organised movement, dwindled away. During this period, the press, focussing its attention on parliamentary ineptitude and Communist indiscretions, preserved a complete

silence about the great meetings he was addressing all over the country. But the movement has never depended on the press; meetings took place, though they were not reported; quietly, the broken ranks were re-forming. Events were proving that MacDonald and the I.L.P. had been right; under the pressure of after-war unemployment and poverty, which weakened the Unions, the workers were turning back to political action. They knew where their leader was to be found.

When, in 1922, the Coalition suddenly smashed, there was nothing accidental or, to those who knew the facts, surprising, either in the election results or in the selection of MacDonald to lead the new parliamentary party, 142 strong. The same hard work, the same inspiration, which had secured his own return in Aberavon, where he turned a minority of over 6,000 into a majority of over 3,000, accounted for the general victory. The fighting men knew well enough where their captain was; the action taken in November, on the initiative of the Scottish members, was soon the unchallengeable will of the entire party. Leadership is a rare quality; but it is an unmistakable one. From the first, the Labour Party dominated the House of Commons; the team was so handled as to pull every ounce of its weight. Nationally and internationally, interest was focussed on the Opposition, rather than upon the Government. Another election, within a year, was a severe strain: its result, in the return of a party of 191, with the opportunity of forming a Government, a turning-point in the history of the movement.

Looking backward, there are few, if any, who doubt the wisdom of the decision to do so. MacDonald, in making it, had no illusions as to what could, and what could not be done. A party commanding less than a third of the votes of the House of Commons had no mandate for constructive change, no power to force it through. It must accept and shoulder an overwhelming burden of evil inheritance; it was, as he told the great meeting in the Albert Hall in January 1924, in the position of the heir to a bankrupt estate. It found itself committed to a legacy of politics which it did not approve, involved in a vicious network of circumstance, at home and abroad, which it had not created and had no strength to break. Obviously, a minority Government could not attempt Socialist legislation; even with a majority, its first task would have to be to clear the ground. Of that clearing of

the ground, he believed that something could be accomplished ; that some part of the essential foundation could be laid ; above all that a profound influence upon public opinion could be exerted, and the national mind prepared to think along Socialist lines. He trusted to the good sense and solid confidence of the rank and file of the party to measure performance not against desire but against possibility ; to consider things as they were, not as they ought to be. The party had neither authority nor power to transform existing institutions ; the monarchy, the Court, the House of Lords, the general framework of the social and economic system, had to be taken as they were, used, as far as possible, in the best interests of the nation as a whole. What could be attempted, was to clear certain great preliminary obstacles—the chaos of international relations being the worst and most fundamental.

In taking office then, in the given conditions, MacDonald was not only doing no violence to his own Socialist conviction, he was obeying a categorical imperative, expressed with his characteristic undecorated simplicity in the phrase "Somebody has got to work." Socialism is a process, an affair of gradual stages. "The space between the 'is' and the 'is to be' has got to be traversed." The rate at which that can be done depends upon intelligence, and the opportunity of government, in stimulating that intelligence, could be great, if wisely used. The legend of dependence on Liberal votes did not disturb him because he knew that it was a legend, and not a fact. His Government was dependent, not on Liberal, but on national support ; above all on the support of opinion in the country which was ready to back any honest effort to do certain necessary things to bring peace, to build houses, to redress unemployment, to give the average man a fairer chance of living a human life. He knew that the "fair-play" stunt, run for a few brief weeks in the press, would not last ; that he would have to meet maliciousness at every turn, and a constant exploitation of every incidental difficulty, major or minor, from Court dress to armaments, to create suspicion and ill-feeling inside the party and outside it. But he believed that facts would tell against this. He was prepared, further, to risk the disappointment of the enthusiast, less patient and secure in faith, to whom concessions to hard facts seemed a betrayal ; who thought, as he has never thought, that the walls of the Capitalist Jericho

would fall if only the Socialist trumpet were blown loud enough. The revolution of mind for which he has always worked is an affair of slow accretions; a substantial contribution to it was made on the day when the plain man, so long shaken by visions of Bolshevik ruin, saw that a Socialist Government could govern, and govern well.

MacDonald's own knowledge that it could do so; that he could form a highly competent Cabinet, gather round him colleagues capable of administration: that there was a contribution they could make to the needs of the world, and, above all, to its need of peace; this, further, constituted for him a moral obligation. A Socialist who rejects the opportunity of service because the conditions are not precisely those which he would choose may be in place in the study, not in the forum of actual life and work.

A word may be said on one decision, sharply criticised at the time, but since seen to be thoroughly justified—his assumption of the Foreign Secretaryship as well as of the Premiership. Though this saved the nation a salary, it seemed to be too heavy a burden for any human strength to bear. The Foreign Office is notoriously the "heaviest" of any. Its work is incessant, and can never wait. His remarkable nervous energy enabled him to bear it, with conspicuous success, for nine months: during those nine months he produced a change in the European situation that justifies the price it cost him. When he came in, a complete deadlock appeared to have been reached: a sort of stalemate, under which Europe was disintegrating. At the same time, our status and reputation in Europe and the world were deplorable; Great Britain had ceased to count. The dishonesty of Mr. Ll. George, the ineptitude of his successors, had wiped us off. Within a very few months all that was changed. MacDonald's own reputation on the Continent stood high, before he took office: since he has won for Britain a dominating rôle in Europe, clearly evidenced at the time of the London Allied Conference, the first Conference of "goodwill" since the War. Before that, his work had borne fruit in the achievement of a good understanding with Italy (with which, thanks to Lord Curzon's mishandling of the Jubaland affair, we were on the verge of a breach); in the recognition of Russia; in the results of the French General Election; in the coming back of the United States to co-operation with Europe. Patience, candour, goodwill, firmness—these are

the instruments of what has been called the "new diplomacy," designed to pave the way for disarmament and a pacific Internationalism.

Against these gains must be set certain losses; first, in the inability of a Prime Minister so burdened to bring a fresh, directing mind to the general problem: to initiate, anticipate, and so prevent trouble; to explain sufficiently widely, either to the nation or the party, some of the facts that ought to be obvious but are not; second, the impossibility of his constant, controlling presence in the House of Commons. At the best, there belongs to the office a certain isolation; the extreme pressure of work made even so phenomenally rapid and concentrated a worker as MacDonald inaccessible, except to his immediate colleagues. These are facts which can hardly be avoided. They are unfortunate, in the given case, since the whole Socialist adventure—to use a phrase which MacDonald himself would indignantly reject—depends, at every stage, on close and conscious co-operation. He believes in co-operation, knows how to effect it in practice, in the work of the party, in the House and outside; but he is not good at talking about it. He is not good at talking of any of the things he deeply believes.

This isolation, the excessive weight upon him, undoubtedly played their part in the fall of the Government, at the 1924 Election, although at the same time it must be remembered that a minority Government can, at any moment, be brought down by a combination of the opposing forces, which in Labour's case outnumbered it permanently, by nearly three to one. At the same time, Labour's biggest achievement—its work for peace—depended on MacDonald himself, and could hardly have been secured had he not been Foreign Secretary. The Russian Treaty was an indispensable part of that work, and will be seen as such, and as necessary to any real restoration of Europe, by painful experience. The Labour Government fell because the lesson Labour had been able to teach about Germany it had not yet been able to teach about Russia; the public mind could still, as 1924 showed, be stampeded by ignorant hatred of Bolshevism into blindness of the fact that along the road of goodwill to and unfettered intercourse with Russia lay both restoration of trade and permanent safety from "propaganda."

For any summary of Labour's work in office, this is not the place. In such an account, MacDonald's own outstanding

contribution will be universally admitted. The unparalleled concentration of abuse upon him, at the time of the Election, and throughout its course, was, in itself, a tribute to his dominant position. His ability, dignity, power, and moral appeal, as Prime Minister, had created for him an extraordinary position in the public mind, and won for his personality a popularity widely coloured with affection. The press addressed itself, without scruple, to destroying this. The honour of the Government was impugned, by the Oppositions, on the Campbell case, after a remarkably clear and full exposition of all the facts had demonstrated the entire baselessness of any charge. The plan was to compel it to accept humiliation, and in that atmosphere, to move on to defeat on the greater issue of the Russian Treaties. With this plan the Cabinet and the Party refused to fall in; at the Party Conference, on 9th October, the appeal to the country was agreed to, with acclamation.

Labour fought the Election on the Government's record; the Oppositions, combined in a Pact which, in the event, wiped out the Liberal Party, fought on Bolshevism, and on an effort to undermine the character of the Prime Minister. Mr. MacDonald made the mistake of descending into the arena, and replying to charges which might have been left to his followers to rebut with the scorn they deserved. In this heated atmosphere, and on the top of a persistent stream of absurd allegations as to the connection of Labour with Bolshevism (unrestrained by the fact that the party had entirely repudiated Communism, again and again, and, most definitely, at the October Conference) came the *Daily Mail's* Red Letter.

The result is a matter of history; Labour increased its vote by over a million, but the increased vote gave the party fewer seats than it had had after 1923; a Tory Government came back, with an unwieldy majority. Since the Pact represented an effective amalgamation of Tory and National Liberal votes (amounting in 1922 to over 8,000,000) the result merely registered a return to the position before Mr. Baldwin's experiment in Protection. Mr. MacDonald took up again the task of Leader of the Opposition, and of the conversion of a majority opinion to Socialism. He had, at the moment, to contend with the recriminations inevitable to defeat; they are not serious. The experiment brought its risks; they were frankly accepted; it reaped its results—great results for peace, important results for party—a new status, a new confidence, a new knowledge.

Last of all men, would he ever strive or expect to reap while the corn is green. His own realism is a permanent factor, not the casual product of any temporary disillusionment or rebuff. Temporary rebuffs make no difference; the "slow aim of wise-hearted Time" is a fact he never forgets. Time is the enemy; there are more things to do than any man can overtake; at the same time a mighty ally, ensuring ultimate victory. He believes in that, does not need to see it.

He is a Socialist who has, for millions of men and women, widened and deepened the conception of Socialism; neither a Conservative, a Liberal, nor a Communist. He shares with some Conservatives, and with a large body of persons in all parties and classes, a deep respect for the continuity of human association, and the beauty of the heritage of its past. But people are learning that the Arts, whether ancient or modern, in all their categories, have to look for their safest and most appreciative guardians to the Socialists, who would make of them national and not private treasures. He shares with some Liberals a love of freedom that is in no sense peculiar to them, while seeing, as they apparently do not, that a system of private ownership and "free" competition excludes the vast majority from freedom. Freedom for the individual depends on Socialism, as freedom for the nation depends on Internationalism. But his Socialism is fundamental; it is the dropped clue in the common interpretation of him and of his work that causes criticism to miss its mark. It is, as he has said, not "a revealed dogma, but a spirit and tendency": it is a principle at once of efficiency and of service. Implicit in all that he has said, done, and written, it has entered too completely into his personality, penetrated and coloured his mind too thoroughly, to find frequent formal expression in words. His own work is part of an evolutionary process; he is probably quite ready to allow it to be seen for less than it is, now, in the secure assurance of the honest workman that good work lasts and tells and will be estimated, by later generations, at its true worth.

RT. HON. J. R. CLYNES, P.C., M.P., D.C.L.

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LABOUR PARTY

BY A PARLIAMENTARY COLLEAGUE

“ I DO not think,” a parliamentary colleague once said, “ there is a sturdier type of democrat or a more honest man in the House of Commons than J. R. Clynes.” There are many sturdy democrats, some honest men, and an occasional successful statesman. Mr. Clynes is all three. He is the best type of Trade-Union politician, the man who has risen to position of high distinction despite the handicaps of adversity and poverty. Speaking of himself and his colleagues, he has said :

It was not our fortune to be sent either to a public school or to a university, and we have lacked all the graces and advantages of the higher learning that comes from those quarters, but . . . we have been brought daily into contact with the real forces of life, with the conditions of labour, with the circumstances under which fortunes are made never to be enjoyed by those who made them, and being in close and constant contact with these great personal forces, much has been learned by us which is unknown by the man who has led a more or less easy life in the universities of our land.

It was in Oldham that Mr. Clynes was born fifty-six years ago, one of seven children of an Irish labourer. As was common in those days among the children of working-class households, the boy set out when only ten years of age to earn his first shillings as a “ half-timer ” in one of the cotton mills. For only two years did he enjoy what limited educational advantages were supposed to have been ensured to the “ half-timer,” for at the age of twelve he passed from school and school-books into the army of workers who spent their full day in the mills. It is somewhat difficult to imagine in these comparatively enlightened days what it meant to a boy of twelve to rise at 4.30 in the early morning in order to reach

work by six o'clock. Mr. Clynes has since related that his early rising was not always preceded by early retirement, and has confessed that often on the journey to work it was a struggle to keep awake and get to the mill in time. Is it to be wondered at that the mature man still retains in his memory the vivid impressions of boyish fear that assailed him on going into the room filled with complicated and whirring machinery that produced a noise deafening to the ears of one unaccustomed to it. His own personal experience at this time served to strengthen in later life his desire "to abolish conditions in no way helpful to those who have to suffer them." An early sense of discontent and a feeling of revolt at the cruel and oppressive conditions in which he found himself quickly manifested themselves in him, and it was natural that he should have been drawn towards Trade Unions and Labour service. Mr. Clynes's first appearance at a Labour meeting was in Bolton where an attempt was being made to establish a separate Trade Union for the "piecers" in the cotton industry. A writer in the *Northern Weekly* described the young Irish lad's first public appearance in the following words:

After the local councillor had spoken, J. R. Clynes rose and faced the audience, which was a large one. Clynes seemed quite a lad, he could not have been twenty years old at this time, and he looked even younger than that. But as soon as he had spoken a few sentences in a clear travelling voice, I said to myself, "Here's a born orator; this young man will be widely heard of in the future."

For a time following upon this incident, Mr. Clynes continued to work at the mill and devoted his spare time to assisting the labourers in his town to form a branch of the National Union of Gasworkers and General Labourers. In 1891 he was offered, and accepted, the post of organiser for the Lancashire area of the Union. There is no lack of generous appreciation of the devoted and valuable services which Mr. Clynes rendered and continues to render to the Trade-Union organisation which provided him with his first real opportunity to apply his abilities and powers for improving the conditions of life of his fellow-workers. A quarter of a century later Mr. Will Thorne, M.P., General Secretary of the Union, declared that:

Few men can know more of the great work of Jack Clynes, the

man who by sheer pluck and ability has won his way from mill hand to Minister, than I who first gave him a Trade-Union paid appointment. . . . Both my Union and myself have ever since congratulated ourselves most heartily on the good fortune that brought us in touch with so remarkable an organiser and administrator.

Mr. Clynes continued in this first Trade-Union post till 1896, when, in addition, he was appointed Secretary of the Union for the Lancashire district. Shortly afterwards he was elected President of the Oldham Trades and Labour Council, which is one of the largest and strongest bodies of its kind in the country, and later became Secretary, which position he filled for many years. After ten years' service in this capacity the Trades and Labour Council pressed a request for Mr. Clynes to be appointed to the Borough bench of Magistrates, and the appointment was duly made. It is not without interest, in the light of subsequent events, to learn that twenty-seven years ago Mr. Clynes attended, as a delegate from the Trades Council, the Oldham Chamber of Commerce. In recalling the fact recently Mr. Clynes observed: "I took an early opportunity of condemning trade gambling and the cornering of goods, and denounced the system which permitted a swarm of speculators to take such large benefits out of the cotton industry. I was then warmly denounced for broaching these unpleasant questions, and was told, of course, that I knew nothing of the necessities of commerce." It is perhaps somewhat unreasonable to criticise the well-informed commercial representatives for not having then the prescience to foresee that the ignorant and presumptuous Trade-Union delegate would become, during the greatest crisis in our national history, Controller of the Food Supplies of the people.

During his long period of service as organiser and secretary in Lancashire, and later as President of the National Union of General Workers and Chairman of the National Federation of Labourers, Mr. Clynes gained knowledge, experience, and skill as an industrial negotiator. The unique distinction is claimed for him of having settled a dispute by citing Shakespeare!

It happened twenty years ago, according to the story told by one of his intimate Trade-Union colleagues, "when a number of our members were on strike in protest against the contract system the quarry owners then insisted upon. One of the owners had

a particularly strong objection to the interference of the Union officials, and said quite openly that he would have nothing to do with a pack of illiterate, ill-educated, self-seeking agitators. Then Clynes arrived on the scene, and with the true Clynes persistence got in touch with the man who would have nothing to do with Trade-Union officialdom. He spent the first morning discussing Shakespeare as a writer of comedies, and promptly received an invitation to lunch. Over the fish he had some doubt concerning Shakespeare's sincerity as a historian, and when the coffee cups were removed he treated his host to a whole act of *Julius Cæsar*. That evening the dispute was settled.

Intimate knowledge of industrial life and the price inexorably demanded by industrial strife has convinced Mr. Clynes of the wisdom and value of arbitration when entered into in a reasonable and proper spirit by both sides.

"Arbitration," he says, "when both sides can agree to it pays both sides better than when either side resolves to fight the other to a bitter end. In industrial, as in other wars, the winner stands to lose, and often pays heavily for victory. Masses of men do not always understand the object of arbitration and officials often have to lead up to it. I have known a man to propose at a meeting 'that we agree to go to arbitration provided we get what we want!'"

Side by side with all his manifold Trade-Union activities in these years Mr. Clynes was much in evidence as a speaker on the Socialist platform. One often hears Mr. Clynes referred to in present days as an example of the cautious, sagacious, and reliable Labour leader in contradistinction to the Socialist. In point of fact, Mr. Clynes is one of the oldest Socialists in the country. Far from having attempted to cloak the fact he has consistently avowed his acceptance of the Socialist principles. To be a moderate or "centre" leader does not involve the rejection of Socialism; on the contrary, the outstanding "moderate" leaders of the Movement, like Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Henderson, and Mr. Snowden, are Socialists, and it seems strange that moderation in methods and tactics should be regarded as indicating the non-acceptance of what is, after all, the fundamental basis of Labour-Party policy. For many years Mr. Clynes was one of the most active speakers on Socialist platforms and a prolific writer in Socialist papers, especially in the *Clarion*, and it was quite in the natural order of things that when the beginnings were made to found the

new independent Labour Party Mr. Clynes should very soon be marked out to contest a constituency. The first invitation came to fight a by-election, but Mr. Clynes withdrew in favour of his older Trade-Union colleague, Mr. James Sexton, the present M.P. for St. Helens. He accepted an invitation later on to contest North-West Manchester at the 1906 General Election, and succeeded in defeating the retiring member, a Conservative, who had held the seat for over twenty years against all challengers. For nineteen years without a break Mr. Clynes has continued to represent this constituency, now known as the Platting Division of Manchester. In the early years of his membership of the House of Commons Mr. Clynes continued to be best known in his own Movement. In Parliament he was somewhat retiring and unobtrusive, though his speeches always made a deep impression on the members for the sanity, the logic, the mastery of detailed knowledge, and the clarity of language and the appeal to reason that always characterised them. Came the War and the strong divisions of opinion which divided the Labour Party into two sections, though without destroying its essential unity. Mr. Clynes associated with the "Majority" Section, which was largely the Trade-Union element in the party, and rapidly came into a position of prominence and influence. Early in February 1915 he made a strong protest on behalf of the Labour Party against the rise in prices, which he attributed mainly to contractors and dealers exploiting the needs of the people. When the Ministry of Food was created with Lord Rhondda as Minister in charge, Mr. Clynes was appointed Parliamentary Secretary. At the end of 1917 he became President of the Consumers' Council, and in June 1918 was appointed Minister of Food, to the general satisfaction, on the death of his chief. His work in this Department in circumstances of great difficulty deservedly won for him a high reputation as an administrator. In November of the same year he resigned from the War Coalition Government following the decision of the Labour Party Conference that the party should resume unfettered independence. The General Election which followed almost at once inflicted severe casualties upon Labour, Mr. Henderson, who had been the Leader of the Majority Section, and Messrs. MacDonald and Snowden, the leaders of the Minority Group, being defeated. In the new Parliament Mr. Clynes was elected Vice-Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and two years later became Chairman. He

was deputy leader to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in the 1923 Parliament, and Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons in the first Labour Government. In the present Parliament he is again deputy leader to Mr. MacDonald.

One of the romances of the age is provided by the ill-educated "half-timer" who was taken away from school at twelve years of age and afterwards became a Minister of the Crown, a Privy Councillor, a freeman of the City of Manchester, and an honorary Doctor of Civil Law of three British Universities. It is a story of grit, dogged determination, and sacrifice in early years when he laboured long hours for low wages and devoted all his spare time and many of the hours that ought to have been given to physical rest and recuperation to laying the foundations of that well-equipped, cultivated, and disciplined mind which has made him a distinguished man in an assembly of men most of whom enjoyed the best educational facilities that our system provides. Mr. Clynes is an educated man in the proper sense of that word. He is more: he is a self-educated man, and he uses the English language with an ease and precision to be envied. Small of stature, gentle-spirited, and perhaps over-inclined to self-effacement, Mr. Clynes is a man of true character and tremendous moral courage. No man is held in greater esteem by the Labour Movement: none is listened to with greater attention and respect by Conferences. As a debater his chief asset is strength of mind and not volume of voice. He seeks to persuade, to convince, to reason with his opponents. Never has he been known to declaim or denounce or abuse. There is something about him, difficult to define, that immediately arrests the attention of his audience and secures for him the "atmosphere" that is most suited to his style of oratory. As a Trade-Union leader he occupies a foremost position in the front rank of leaders. His is the brain of the unskilled labourers, and it is due mainly to his influence and ability, supported by the devoted loyalty to and admiration for him of the burly Mr. Will Thorne, M.P., that the Union which he represents occupies the strong position which it does in the Movement where the skilled unions predominate. Trade-Union organisation and endeavour mean something more to him than improving conditions of employment and life which have been debased under the Industrial Revolution. He wants to restore some of the essentials of labour which, if they have not been actually destroyed, have certainly been crushed almost

out of existence by the stern and oppressive operation of the spirit of materialism. The pride of labour in the craft of labouring men has, he contends, throughout the ages gone far to lessen the quantity of shoddy output and scamped production which has been a leading feature of our industrial era. But good taste and beauty have not been altogether banished, and many labour undertakings have helped to restore some of the better features which in the service of all classes of producers should never be destroyed. He looks forward to development in this direction whereby an opportunity will be given to workmen for a good use of natural qualities which have not been used before. The dignity of labour and the pride in craft require to be recognised and fostered both in the interest of the workers themselves and of the nation as a whole. Politically Mr. Clynes is a democrat, a believer in the resort to constitutional political action, in the use of the rights of citizenship. Revolutionary upheavals, the appeal to violence, the embittering of class relations, he strongly disapproves of. He believes that the best service can be rendered, not in raising passions, but in creating ideas. A few months before the first Labour Government was formed he wrote: "I have felt that the facts of a case were so strong on our side that if people could not be persuaded by the temperate use of them they could not be convinced by mere declamation or noise." His attitude towards Communism has been made unmistakably clear on many occasions. Dealing with the penalties suffered by Labour at the recent General Election from the conduct of the Communists, he declared that "our toleration has not only been misplaced but wasted." Quite briefly he explained the irreconcilable positions of the Labour Party and the Communists.

In countries where no democratic weapon exists a class struggle for the enthronement of force by one class over other classes may be condoned, but in this country where the wage-earners possess 90 per cent. of the voting power of the country agitation to use not the power which is possessed but some risky class dictatorship is a futile and dangerous doctrine. Our work is therefore the work of conversion and not coercion. We must advance by consent and gather force which will endure for the reason that people have signified their approval of our conceptions of national law, international relations, and social needs.

As a final observation he remarked that it might not be

true that our country gets the government it deserves, but it can get the government which it desires.

One other characteristic of Mr. Clynes must be mentioned. In no man engaged in British public life is the quality of loyalty more in evidence than in the deputy leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Innumerable illustrations might be cited, but one is sufficient for it is notable. In the two years preceding the General Election of 1922 Mr. Clynes had carried the heavy burden of parliamentary leadership in very trying circumstances. He led the party with ability, courage, and confidence, and securely established himself among the small band of front-rank House of Commons personalities. It was generally expected that he would be re-elected leader when the new Parliament met. At the party meeting, however, the name of Mr. MacDonald, who had been out of the House for four years following his defeat at the end of 1918, was submitted in competition. By a narrow majority the vote went in favour of Mr. MacDonald, who secured the undivided support of the increased "radical" section of the party. A small man might have regarded this defeat as a personal rebuff and retired from active participation in the direction of the party affairs. Mr. Clynes, on the contrary, accepted the unexpected change in handsome and gracious terms that increased the general respect and esteem in which he was held and won for him the admiration of all parties for his generous sportsmanship. No leader ever had a more loyal lieutenant than did Mr. MacDonald in Mr. Clynes. Neither by voice, action, nor attitude did he swerve a single hair's-breadth from his declaration of confidence and loyal support. With him it is always the Movement that counts, never personal interests or personal advantages. And throughout the whole of his long and distinguished career loyalty to the Movement has been a conspicuous characteristic. At the time when the Labour Movement decided to end its direct association with the War Coalition Government and called upon its representatives in the Ministry to resign, Mr. Clynes, who strongly disagreed with the latter decision for quite impersonal reasons, at once fell in with the wishes of the Conference by tendering his resignation. He impressed an American observer at this time as being a man who "would never join a 'split,' never lend himself to a *Morning Post* trade-union party. . . . If anyone thought he could be used to break the Labour Movement, that person did not know

Clynes. The marks of suffering of his early life are on him. He is of the working class. He will die in their ditch. . . . He is pure proletarian." Success has come to him in generous measure. Honours have been heaped upon him. But withal he remains as he commenced, a worker belonging to the working-class Movement. He knows the workers, and he loves them. He has a deep faith in their common sense. He knows that they can be loyal beyond measure, that they can be considerate and understanding even when they are dissatisfied with something their leaders have done or have not done, that when they place their trust in their own elected it will never be withdrawn unless it is forfeited. It is the millions of men and women and children in the humble homes of the land whom he serves. He belongs to them, and no selfish advantage, no personal pique, nor any other petty consideration will ever destroy or undermine the loyalty of Mr. Clynes to those from whom he is sprung and for the advancement of whose well-being he has worked throughout the whole of his adult life.

RT. HON. ARTHUR HENDERSON, M.P.

SECRETARY OF THE LABOUR PARTY, AND HOME SECRETARY
IN THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

BY THE EDITOR

AMONG the makers of the modern Labour Movement Mr. Arthur Henderson holds a position of peculiar influence and responsibility. More than any other man in the front rank he has devoted himself to the task of organising the movement for political purposes and equipping it with the machinery for effective electoral work against the older parties. He has been described, not without exaggeration perhaps, as the greatest caucus manager in the world. In the American sense of the words he is not a "political boss," and the organisation he controls bears no resemblance to Tammany Hall: but his immense experience in the management of political affairs and his extended authority in the counsels of the Labour Movement certainly entitle him to be regarded as one of the great organisers of his generation. He is in one sense the most representative Labour leader of our time: a Trade Unionist of long standing, a practical and sagacious politician standing midway between the extremes of right and left on matters of policy, a Socialist without a doctrinaire rigidity in his views, a Free Churchman with an austere standard of personal conduct, a temperance reformer, a weighty speaker and able negotiator equally master of himself on the platform and in the council chamber. Men of his type and character have made the British Trade Union and Labour Movement the sanest, steadiest, and most united working-class movement in the world, largely because they have imparted to it their own qualities of mind and spirit.

Mr. Henderson was born in Glasgow in 1863, but whilst he was still young the family moved to Newcastle, and he was educated at St. Mary's School in that city. He was

apprenticed to the ironfounding trade, and served his time at the big Tyneside engineering firm of Robert Stephenson & Son, where he continued to work as an iron-moulder until he entered public life. He had not reached his thirtieth year when he was elected a member of the Newcastle city council. Finding it difficult to combine his public duties with his work in the foundry, he decided to give up the latter employment and refused two offers to remain in the trade on conditions which would have brought him whilst still a young man to a position of managerial responsibility. He continued his association with his Trade Union, however, and held every office in the Friendly Society of Iron-founders (now amalgamated with other organisations into the National Union of Foundry-workers), including that of honorary president, which he still holds. When his union decided to take part in political action, he was selected as its first Parliamentary representative. In the course of his Trade-Union career he served as Workmen's Chairman of the North-East Coast and of the Lancashire Conciliation Boards (Ironfounding industry), and as a member of the Board of Trade Arbitration Court and of the Industrial Council; during the War he also acted as chairman of the National Advisory Committee on War Output, and as a member of the Munitions of War Committee. He has had an extraordinarily wide experience of industrial negotiation and of Government inquiries into industrial conditions, as well as of various Royal Commissions. He has at different times served upon the Commission on the Selection of Justices of the Peace, the one appointed to consider Railwaymen's grievances in 1911, the one that conducted an investigation into the question of Honours; he was on the Government Commission for providing occupations for Belgian refugees, and also on the executive committee of the Prince of Wales's National Relief Fund; he was a member of the Government Committee which inquired into the question of employment for disabled soldiers and sailors, and also of the Government Committee on Exchequer Grants. In the National Joint Conference appointed by the Coalition Government in 1919 to inquire into the causes of industrial unrest and to make recommendations for dealing with it he acted as chairman of the Trade-Union side and bore a considerable share of the work of framing the joint recommendations which mark the farthest point yet reached by employers and Trade Unionists in agreeing upon the main principles of industrial

policy. It is in such activities as these that his long experience and sound judgment, his firmness and patience, are seen at their best.

After leaving the iron-foundry and finding a new occupation as organiser of circulation for one of the northern newspapers, Mr. Henderson devoted himself with great energy and success to public work. He became a prominent figure in political circles as spokesman of the radical point of view. There was in those days no Labour Party, and the idea of political Labour representation, independent of either the Liberal or the Tory Party, was only just beginning to find organic expression in the movement, sponsored by Keir Hardie and his friends. For the time Mr. Henderson worked with the Liberal Party in the north, and was indeed chosen as colleague for John (not then a Viscount) Morley in the representation of Newcastle, but he withdrew in favour of James Craig. This was in 1895, two years after the birth of the Independent Labour Party, whose activities were to change so radically the attitude of the leaders of organised Labour towards the Liberal Party. Mr. Henderson's experiences as a working-class politician gradually changed his opinion as to the possibility of working with Liberal and Tory employers: he encountered among them a considerable amount of hostility to the suggestion that working-men should be adopted as candidates for Parliament under Liberal auspices. But he continued steadily to pursue his public career, and when he removed with his family to Darlington he stood for the town council and was elected, becoming mayor of the town in 1904, in his fortieth year. He became a borough magistrate two years later. He was elected also to the Durham County Council. It was in the year preceding his mayoralty that he entered Parliament as member for Barnard Castle, at a bye-election in which he fought as the first Labour candidate against the nominees of both the Tory and the Liberal Party. In the previous year Mr. (now Sir) D. J. Shackleton was returned unopposed as Labour member for Clitheroe, whilst Mr. Will Crooks won Woolwich in 1903. The number of members calling themselves Labour men in Parliament was thus raised to eleven—including among them Richard Bell, John Burns, Henry Broadhurst, Thomas Burt, William R. Cremer, Benjamin Pickard, "Mabon" (William Abraham), and John Wilson—though the seats held by members returned under the auspices of the Labour Representation Committee

numbered five : Bell (who really belonged to the Liberal Party), Hardie, Crooks, Shackleton, and Henderson having the honour in that sense of being foundation members of the Labour Party as a separate and independent body.

The political organisation of the Labour Movement was still in its infancy when Mr. Henderson entered the House of Commons. An aggregate membership of about a million was represented in the Trade Unions and Socialist Societies affiliated to the Labour Representation Committee in 1903. At the annual conference of the infant party in the following year Mr. Henderson was elected as a member of the executive committee, and at the same time became the treasurer of the party, a position he held until 1911, when he became its secretary and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald took the office of treasurer : both of them occupy the same positions to-day. In the next year (1905) Mr. Henderson was elected chairman of the national executive and in that capacity presided over the historic annual conference at the Memorial Hall, in February, 1906, which celebrated the advent of the new party in the new Parliament with twenty-nine members under its own officers and whips. In his presidential address Mr. Henderson dwelt with justifiable pride and emphasis upon the significance of the results in the General Election of 1906, in which the Liberal Party was returned to power under Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman's leadership with a majority of 130 over all sections of the House. The address struck firmly and clearly the note of political independence. He made it perfectly plain that the new party was not an annexe of the Liberal Party :

“In my opinion,” he declared, “our policy towards the new Government will be exactly the same as it was towards the old Government. We shall give them support when it is possible, but we shall oppose them when it is necessary. Doubtless their own loyal followers will give them support ; but we have a much greater responsibility devolving upon us than this. Upon our party rests the responsibility of keeping this Government up to the scratch of its own professions, and a further responsibility of shaping their policy in harmony with public necessity. Our marvellous successes at the polls have demonstrated that the Labour forces are the greatest factor in the present political situation. The wage-earners have at last declared themselves in favour of definite, united, independent political action, and we this morning can rejoice in an electoral triumph which, having

regard to all the circumstances, can be safely pronounced phenomenal. We can congratulate ourselves to-day that a real live independent Labour Party, having its own chairman, its own deputy-chairman, and its own whips, is now an accomplished fact in British politics."

The personal career of Mr. Henderson from 1906 onwards is intimately bound up with the history of the Labour Party. The development of Labour's political organisation has been his special concern. Both inside and out of Parliament he has been one of its most active and conspicuous leaders, and at crucial moments in its history he has more than once exerted a decisive influence upon its policy and its methods of work. At the beginning of the 1906 Parliament he shared with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald the responsibility of managing the affairs of the Parliamentary Labour Party as joint Whip, with Keir Hardie as chairman; and in Mr. MacDonald's absence on one of his tours abroad he assumed the duties of party secretary. In the session of 1908 he was elected as chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party and was re-elected to this office in 1909. Two years later Mr. Ramsay MacDonald resigned the secretaryship on his election as Parliamentary chairman (Mr. G. N. Barnes having filled the office in the intervening year) and as already stated Mr. Henderson then took over the secretaryship of the Labour Party. It is in this position that his biggest work has been done. It imposed upon him very great responsibilities, both of administration and leadership, and he has displayed in it remarkable qualities of courage and strength of character.

One great test of this kind occurred at the outbreak of war in 1914. It was inevitable that this great calamity should produce profound differences of opinion within the Labour Movement. These differences came to a head within the Parliamentary Labour Party at the very beginning of hostilities. It lies chiefly to the credit of two men, Mr. Henderson and Mr. MacDonald, that the issue which divided the Movement did not at the same time tear it asunder and wreck the political organisation which had been built up: their patience, common sense, and far-sightedness served to keep the party united, tolerant of the differences within its ranks, and resolute to prevent anything being said or done that would make it impossible for the leaders holding opposite opinions upon the War to be reconciled and to work together

again for common causes when the delirium of war had passed. The immediate result of the War was a change in the political leadership. Mr. MacDonald, unable to bring his colleagues to his way of thinking in regard to the War, resigned the chairmanship of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and Mr. Henderson took his place. As chairman of the Parliamentary Party he was later required to take action in a matter of almost equal importance, when Mr. Asquith, then Prime Minister, invited him to join the first Coalition Government. The co-operation of the party in this development was essential. Mr. Henderson could not act alone. The proposal was discussed by the national executive singly and in joint meetings with the Parliamentary Party, and it was decided to accept Mr. Asquith's invitation—though the Parliamentary Party was at first doubtful whether this step could be taken without the sanction of a party conference. When the Coalition was formed, Mr. Henderson entered the Cabinet, in 1915, as President of the Board of Education, relinquishing his salary as secretary of the party but remaining responsible both for that office and for the chairmanship of the Parliamentary Party—the post of Chief Whip which he then held going to another member, Mr. F. W. Goldstone, whilst Mr. John Hodge was appointed as acting chairman. Mr. Henderson's position as President of the Board of Education was largely nominal, though he gave general attention to the affairs of the Department. Later he took the sinecure of Paymaster-General, but his real work in the first Coalition was to advise the Cabinet on Labour matters, and as stated in an earlier paragraph he acted as chairman of two committees connected with the Ministry of Munitions. Out of this activity came in due time the Ministry of Labour, the foundations of which as a Government Department were largely laid by him, though the first Minister to bear the title was Mr. John Hodge. The records of the Labour Movement bear witness to the acute controversies roused by these departures, under the pressure of a great national emergency, from the established policy of political independence. But they also make it clear that Mr. Henderson's action in advising co-operation with the older parties in the stress of the national effort to win the War received the sanction of the majority of the Movement's supporters. When the first Coalition fell at the end of 1916 and Mr. Lloyd George sought to retain the support of Labour for the second Coalition he was forming

there was more hesitation: but the promises of Mr. Lloyd George and his urgency in insisting that everything must be subordinated to the task of winning the War overcame the reluctance of the party leaders to continue the policy of coalition, and after very full discussion it was decided that Mr. Lloyd George should be supported. Mr. Henderson thereupon entered the War Cabinet of five, without portfolio, and in that position bore at least his share of the criticism directed against the Government until his resignation from the War Cabinet in August 1917. He continued steadfastly to tread the path he had chosen until the time came when an issue of principle arose upon which he was compelled to take the decision which everyone who had followed his career up to that point knew that he would take without the slightest hesitation.

This decision brings us to the episode of Mr. Henderson's Government mission to Russia, his espousal of the proposal to hold the International Labour and Socialist Conference at Stockholm for the discussion of war aims, and his resignation from the War Cabinet. It is a curious chapter in the history of British politics, still obscure and tangled in many of its details; but it is of vital moment, not only in the career of Mr. Henderson himself, but in the history of the Labour Movement. It produced important consequences. It is probable, indeed, that the political historians a generation or two hence will see it as the incident which marked the beginning of the end of the Liberal Party as one of the dominant parties in this country, and as the one fatal mistake which wrecked the astonishing career of Mr. Lloyd George as a front-rank statesman.

For many months before Mr. Henderson's visit to Russia the British Labour Movement had been taking a great deal of interest in democratic diplomacy. The Russian Revolution had quickened its instinct for a democratic settlement of the War, and discussions were taking place upon the proposal to hold an inter-allied conference of the Labour and Socialist Parties with the ultimate aim of re-establishing the unity of the International which had been shattered when war broke out. Matters had reached the stage, early in 1917, at which it was decided to issue invitations for such a conference when the leaders of the Russian Revolution, not yet at the point of passing into its second or Communist phase, when Kerensky was superseded by Lenin, announced their intention

of calling all the Labour and Socialist Parties into conference with the object of framing a general working-class peace policy. This was the beginning of the famous "Stockholm Conference" controversy which produced such remarkable results. Among the orthodox statesmen responsible for the conduct of the War there was great opposition to the project of calling this international Labour and Socialist Conference. They were beginning to fear the vigorous self-assertion of organised Labour in the field of international diplomacy and were apprehensive of the future course of the revolutionary movement in Russia. The War Cabinet had taken the step of sending Mr. Henderson on a Government mission to Russia, with instructions to investigate the situation and to remain there as Ambassador if he felt the state of affairs warranted his taking control. As one who was bent on the resolute prosecution of the War until German militarism had been decisively overthrown, Mr. Henderson went to Russia with an open mind about the proposal to hold an international Labour and Socialist Conference on the lines indicated by the Russian revolutionary leaders, which had taken the place of the more limited conference proposed by the Allied Socialists. He had not committed himself. Unlike the Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, he was not then satisfied that the proposed Conference would serve the purpose anticipated: but he went to Russia with the knowledge that Mr. Lloyd George believed at that time that if the Conference were held it would be dangerous to allow it to assemble without representatives of French Socialism and British Labour.

In Russia, after a close examination of the situation from both the political and the military point of view, Mr. Henderson formed definite conclusions which were communicated as a matter of course to the War Cabinet and also to the national executive of the Labour Party. One conclusion was that it was eminently desirable to hold the proposed conference for the purpose of consultation on the question of democratic war aims but without binding resolutions. He returned home at the same time as a deputation of four Russian revolutionary representatives arrived in this country; and in the ensuing discussions it became clear that the Russians wanted the Conference to take binding decisions, and meant to hold the conference, with or without the participation of the British working-class leaders. Mr. Henderson accompanied a deputation of the national executive of the Labour

Party which went to Paris to discuss the Russian invitation with the leaders of French Socialism, and at that meeting arrangements were made for the calling of the Conference at Stockholm, in September of that year (1917). To give effect to the decision as far as British Labour was concerned it was decided by the national executive to summon a special party conference.

At this conference, held in London on 10th August, 1917, Mr. Henderson made a full statement of the conclusions he had reached and of the considerations that had influenced him in recommending that the Russian invitation should be accepted. He insisted that the conference was to be held purely for purposes of consultation and that no obligatory decisions were to be taken. It was well understood by this time that the Government was opposed to the holding of the Stockholm Conference. For reasons that are still obscure, Mr. Lloyd George had changed his mind—and apparently he expected that Mr. Henderson would change his, with equal facility. Among his colleagues in the Labour Party there was a group which also expected Mr. Henderson to change his mind. But once made up, Mr. Henderson's mind is not easily changed when an issue of principle is concerned, and he firmly adhered to the view he had taken, repeating at the special party conference the advice he had given to the national executive that British Labour should participate in the Stockholm Conference on the prescribed conditions. By the Government and the press it was apparently expected that the special party conference would reject Mr. Henderson's advice. A resolution was actually proposed at the conference to the effect that no case had been made out for the holding of the Stockholm Conference: this being put as an amendment to the executive resolution proposing that the Russian invitation should be accepted on condition that the Conference should be consultative and not mandatory. Until Mr. Henderson made his statement and expressed his view the issue was in doubt, but there was no room to doubt thereafter: by 1,651,000 votes to 391,000 the amendment was rejected and the executive resolution adopted as a substantive motion by the overwhelming vote of 1,846,000 to 550,000.

As a result of the attitude he had taken up on this question Mr. Henderson was bitterly attacked. He was charged with having misled the party conference by withholding from it information regarding the alleged change of view on the

Stockholm proposal held by the Russian revolutionary Government. This charge will not bear a moment's examination. He told the delegates at the special party conference that since his return from Russia there had been a change in the situation there, for the first Provisional Government had been replaced by the Administration formed by Kerensky. He also stated that the Belgian Socialists and American Labour had decided not to participate in the Stockholm Conference; that an influential group of French Parliamentary Socialists were opposed to the project; and that the Russian Socialists demanded a binding conference and not merely a consultation. But he nevertheless made it plain that he considered the Stockholm Conference would serve a useful purpose in showing clearly to the world—and to the German people in particular—what the Allied democracies conceived themselves to be fighting for. The divergence of policy between him and the War Cabinet thus became clear, and he resigned from the Government, feeling that his future course of action must be guided by the decision of the party to which he belonged. It is beyond question that Mr. Lloyd George's change of attitude towards the Stockholm proposal, his failure to appreciate Mr. Henderson's firmness of character, his inability to understand that British Labour trusted its own chosen leaders more than they trusted him, Prime Minister though he was, brought about a profound change in the relationships of the political parties. It is interesting, but perhaps unprofitable, to speculate upon the course that British politics might have taken if the breach had not come between Mr. Henderson and Mr. Lloyd George. One thing is certain: Mr. Henderson's resignation from the War Cabinet had a vitally important and permanent effect upon the development of the political Labour Movement, by restoring its independence and enabling it to begin reorganising in preparation for the coming of peace.

To the task of reorganisation Mr. Henderson addressed himself as soon as he was released from office. At the Blackpool Trades Union Congress held in September of that year, a month after his resignation, he addressed the delegates as fraternal delegate from the Labour Party and foreshadowed some of the plans that were being framed to re-establish the unity and fighting spirit of the political Labour Movement. Elsewhere in these volumes the changes made in the constitution and programme of the Labour Party are described in

detail. Here it is enough to say that they took effect just at the time when under the new Representation of the People Act the electorate of the country was enormously increased by the enfranchisement of women, and the Coalition forces were preparing for a General Election. There had been no appeal to the people since December 1910, when the Labour Party placed fifty-six candidates in the field. Mr. Henderson as secretary of the party was active in the work of organisation in the constituencies and in the building up of the party on the new basis. For the first time in its history the party found itself equipped with machinery for the effective conduct of its propaganda in the country. It fell to Mr. Henderson to move the resolution, at the first conference of the party under the new constitution, which finally brought the political truce of the parties to an end, and restored Labour's freedom of action. As a consequence Labour Ministers still in the Coalition Government were obliged to reconsider their position, and the principal ones among them decided to withdraw from the Government.

The Labour Party was thus free to fight the General Election of 1918 as an independent party—indeed, the only independent party, for Liberals and Tories were joined together and fought under the joint leadership of Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Bonar Law on a common platform. For eight months prior to the Election Mr. Henderson had been working to prepare for the biggest effort the party had ever made. He was fully occupied with directing the work of organising the local labour parties in new constituencies and with the selection of a greatly increased number of Labour candidates. The success of these efforts is to be measured by the fact that when the time came no fewer than 361 constituencies were contested, as compared with no more than seventy-eight in the General Election of January 1910. New methods of propaganda and electioneering were tried, and special attention was given to the new women voters. Among the Labour candidates who went to the poll were four women, and another interesting feature of the contest was the adoption of Labour candidates for six of the University seats. In the result, the aggregate Labour vote was increased from about half a million to a total of two and a quarter millions, and the strength of the Labour Party in the House of Commons was increased (with the addition of three or four members who were elected as Independent Labour men) to sixty-one. This Election

marks the first direct challenge the Labour Party had been able to make to the older parties as a definite alternative Government. Unfortunately there were a number of casualties among the older members of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and Mr. Henderson was one of them. He had decided to transfer his candidature from Barnard Castle, which he had held since 1903, to a London constituency, in order that he might be in closer touch with the headquarters organisation during the Election, and afterwards. He therefore fought East Ham South, and polled over 5,000 votes, but failed to win the seat. He continued to devote his energies to his work as Secretary of the party until an opportunity came some nine months later, in August 1919, to contest a by-election at Widnes, where in a straight fight with a Coalition Unionist he increased the Labour poll by 3,583 votes and won the seat. In the next session of Parliament he was elected Chief Whip and held this office with that of Secretary of the party until the next General Election.

In these later years, he took a very prominent part in the discussions that went on within the organised Movement regarding the re-establishment of the Labour and Socialist International, and the consolidation and co-ordination of the political and industrial sections of the Movement. It is due in no small degree to his efforts that both these objects were achieved. The British Labour Movement emerged from the shattering experiences of the War far more united and sure of its ground than any of the Continental movements. Its influence was paramount in the period of reconstruction which had to be entered upon when the War ended. In the fierce polemics that took place between the representatives of Russian communism with its vain dream of world revolution and those of the ideal of Parliamentary Democracy embodied in the Second International, Mr. Henderson stood steadfastly by the principles upon which the British Labour Party was founded, and his influence had a very great deal to do with the final achievement of international unity among the political Labour and Socialist organisations of Europe. Within the national movement, also, he worked hard for the creation of the National Joint Council, the body which represents and co-ordinates the work of the three main bodies—the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, the National Executive of the Labour Party, and the Parliamentary Labour Party. Of the National Joint Council he became Secretary.

Under the scheme of co-ordination a number of joint departments were created at headquarters to serve the interests of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party, and the adoption of the scheme has been accepted by the organised movement as the triumph of a principle to which Mr. Henderson has always attached the utmost importance in his tenure of office. This achievement entitles him to be regarded as the architect of the Labour Movement.

As one of the foremost figures in the political Labour Movement Mr. Henderson has experienced some electoral reverses, largely because at Election times he has given more attention than he could afford to spare to platform work outside his own constituency. At the General Election of 1922, he sustained his second defeat, but he made good his loss of Widnes by winning a few months later a by-election contest at Newcastle East. In the 1923 Election he was faced there with a combination of the older parties which proved sufficient to defeat him for a third time; but he regained his position in Parliament by fighting another by-election at Burnley. In all these reverses, not less than in his successes, he proved himself an election campaigner of remarkable energy and skill, reflected uniformly in an increase of the Labour vote. When the Labour Government was formed after the 1923 Election Mr. Henderson was not actually in Parliament, but his inclusion in Mr. MacDonald's Cabinet was of course inevitable and the vacancy at Burnley, caused by the death of Mr. Dan Irving, a Socialist veteran of the Social Democratic Party, permitted him the opportunity of fighting the first contest after the formation of the Labour Government, and enabled him to take his place on the Front Bench as Secretary of State for Home Affairs. With the approval of the National Executive of the Labour Party he relinquished his official salary as Secretary, but continued in charge of the party administration with the designation of Honorary Secretary, an arrangement which enabled headquarters to obtain consultation and advice on questions of election policy, organisation, and finance. He also became a member of the executive committee appointed when the Labour Government assumed office to keep the Cabinet in touch with the Parliamentary Labour Party. His work as Home Secretary was largely administrative, but he took the initiative in introducing some important pieces of legislation, including a compendious measure for the amendment of the

Factory Acts. His most successful achievement as a Minister, however, was the part he played at the Fifth Assembly of the League of Nations in Geneva in framing, along with his Cabinet colleague, Lord Parmoor, the draft Protocol for the settlement of international disputes by methods of judicial arbitration and conciliation. To see this work through to completion he remained at Geneva until the end of the Assembly, returning home to plunge at once into the Election campaign. He fought successfully to retain his seat at Burnley, and upon the resignation of the Labour Government returned to his work at the Labour headquarters.

His career has thus covered the whole period of Labour's political history, beginning with the opening years of the present century. For the whole of that time he has been at the very centre of events. His influence and the effects of his work have been felt throughout the whole organised movement, in the shaping of political and industrial policy as well as in the development of organisation and the conversion of popular opinion by education and propaganda. In the making of the democratic movement he has worked for impersonal ends, and no man has done more to place the Labour Party in the position it occupies to-day.

RT. HON. PHILIP SNOWDEN, M.P.

LABOUR'S FIRST CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

By W. W. HENDERSON

THE Labour Movement, being one in which personal wealth, social position and influential connections have had little scope for play, has produced men and women of exceptional qualities. Whatever it may prove to be in the future with its developing thought, its ever-widening outlook, and the tendency under the experience of representative responsibility to blunt the sharp edge of bitter class consciousness, no one will be inclined to question the statement that hitherto the Labour Movement has been a hard and exacting school to graduate through to national positions of power and leadership. The University for these men and women was the mine, the foundry, the railway engine, the engineering shop, the departmental stores, and the various other hives of industry. Hard work, loyal service to their fellow-workers, more than average personality, and outstanding personal qualities of one sort or another gradually lifted them through positions of increasing responsibility and authority to national leadership. Such men and women are Mr. Clynes, the deputy-leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, Mr. Henderson, the Secretary of the National Labour Party, Mr. Thomas, the Political Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, and Miss Margaret Bondfield, Secretary of the Women's Section of the Federation of General Workers. Other leaders, like Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the ex-Prime Minister, and Mr. Philip Snowden, the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, have risen to eminence through the political wing of the Labour Movement. Their chief activities have been as writers, propagandists, pamphleteers, lecturers, and parliamentary debaters. They were the leaders of the Socialist bodies forming part of the political Labour Movement.

It is, indeed, not easy to define with exactness the combina-

tion of personal qualities and attributes that, generally speaking, it has been necessary to possess in order to win through to positions of Labour leadership. There has not been what might be termed any rule-of-thumb test—a recognised list of qualifications that would ensure to the possessor that he should be singled out for distinction by the rank and file of the workers. It is not a definite calling—a profession to be taken up, after qualifying for it, like the legal or medical profession. Leaders do not make themselves; they are made by the Movement, and it is no haphazard or accidental process. A comparison of the personal qualities of different leaders discloses the fact that perhaps the one thing they have had in common was equality of opportunity to serve in the Movement to which they belonged. That they were singled out by their comrades for the process of training by experience and the carrying of responsibility was due as a rule to their possessing in a marked degree qualities which are essential elements in the make-up of leaders.

But broadly speaking, apart from sound intelligence, reliable judgment, platform ability, and other qualities which may or may not make an individual stand out from his fellow-men, uprightness of character would seem to have been demanded of men and women in the Labour Movement before they came to be looked to for guidance and leadership. There is in the British Labour Movement at any rate a strong strain of what for want of a better term I would call the Nonconformist spirit. It was this spirit which was the driving force in the earlier radical movements, and the majority of Labour's present leaders properly so-called obtained much of their earlier public training in Nonconformist spheres. It is men and women of this type, more than of any other, who have been mainly responsible for controlling and guiding the destinies of the political and industrial Labour Movement, and they have stamped their influence in no small measure on the great constructive policies of the Labour Movement. To-day it is no unusual thing for new recruits drawn from other than the working-classes to explain their adhesion to Labour on the ground of its high ideals. There is a spiritual power in Labour policy which is its most conspicuous element. That is why it is so often referred to by political opponents as the workers' religion, and why in the early years of the Movement it was customary to refer cynically and ironically to Labour as the party of idealists, dreamers, visionaries !

A typical leader, in the full sense of the term, of this powerful and still expanding Labour Movement is Mr. Philip Snowden. Mr. Snowden was born at Cowling in Yorkshire in the year 1864, and was educated in the village Board School, where he became in course of time a pupil teacher. In 1879, however, his father, who was a weaver, lost his work in the village, and migrated to Nelson, taking with him his son. A new occupation had to be found and the boy secured employment as a clerk in an Insurance office at Burnley. Here he remained seven years, gaining a business experience and the beginnings of his knowledge of finance which, developed by study and concentration, were to prove so important to him in later life. In 1886, at the age of twenty-two, he won a place in the Civil Service by open competition, and for the next few years saw life as an Excise Officer in different parts of the country, his duties taking him at one time as far north as the Orkney Islands and at another as far south as Devon and Cornwall. These were very happy days in the life of the young Excise Officer who forty years later was to become head of the Treasury whose humble servant he was then, and nothing delights the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer to-day more than to sit in his well-stocked library and to cull from his memory reminiscences of the long tramps and interesting experiences of those less arduous days.

At this period Mr. Snowden was not merely indifferent to Socialism: he was perhaps strongly antipathetic to it; in politics he was, like so many of his present colleagues, an active Liberal, and while no doubt he took a normal and intelligent interest in public affairs it is doubtful whether his vision of what the future might hold in store for him ever at that time embraced a long and distinguished parliamentary and public career. It was about this time that he fell off his bicycle while riding in Devonshire, and hurt his back. The injury proved to be a serious one and, not being properly treated, resulted in a permanent disablement which necessitated the abandonment of his Civil Service occupation. It would be useless to speculate on whether Mr. Snowden would have been lost to public life but for this accident. Lord Birkenhead has said that "in the ordinary course of events he would no doubt have risen to such preferment and secondary distinction as the conditions of that Service allow. He would have been a successful man known to a narrow circle." But a miracle followed the accident, and like Paul converted to Christianity when on the way to

Damascus in furtherance of his crusade against the Christians, Mr. Snowden was converted to Socialism when preparing to attack and demolish that faith. During the long hours of inactivity which he was compelled to endure as the result of his accident he began to read literature dealing with Labour questions and with Socialism. Shortly after he was able to move about again he undertook to deliver a lecture on Socialism at a local Liberal Club. The expectation was that he would thoroughly and completely expose the fallacies of this new-fangled idea. Mr. Snowden proceeded to read up the case in earnest, and among the first books which he read was *Kirkup's Inquiry into Socialism* which made him an immediate convert to the policy which he had set out to combat! "Mr. Snowden, the convert, arose strong in faith, if not in body, and began to preach the crusade at first to a small body of adherents in the North Country."

Mr. Snowden had returned to his native village, and very soon after Enid Stacey, a leading Socialist of her time, visited the district and gave a lecture. "The subject was the relationship of temperance to prosperity, showing the economic waste which was implied by the drinking habits of many of the people." There was very strong press opposition at the time, which drew from the young Socialist of Cowling a letter to the *Keighley News*, in which he made a careful statement showing the effect of the proposals in his own village, and containing a clear and concise defence of his Socialist principles. "This letter," we are told, "made a great stir, because of its clear, convincing logic, and its strong, persuasive style. Snowden was at once a marked man. He joined the Keighley branch of the Independent Labour Party, and before long was recognised as its leading orator in the town." Local public affairs had begun to claim his attention. He had served on the Parish Council at Cowling, undertaking the position of honorary clerk to the Council, and also for three years on the School Board of the village. He now won a place as a Socialist candidate both on the School Board at Keighley and on its Town Council. In 1898 he was elected a member of the National Administrative Council of the Independent Labour Party, of which body he became Chairman in 1903.

In 1900 he made his first bid for parliamentary honours. Mr. A. G. Gardiner has described the occasion in vivid colours.

It was the eve of the General Election of 1900. The Khaki

fever was at its height, and Liberalism at the lowest ebb of its fortunes. Nowhere was it lower than at Blackburn. For twenty years the capital of the weaving trade had been a stronghold of Conservatism, and now there was no Liberal with sufficient courage to challenge it. Suddenly there appeared on the scene a stranger out of the West Riding. So feeble he seemed that he moved the foe to pity more than to anger. He came limping into the lists on foot—a pallid-faced young man, small of stature, and leaning heavily on a stick, one foot dragging helplessly along the ground. He came unattended. There was no one to receive him save a few eager working-men who had been preaching Socialism to deaf ears in the market place. There was no organisation to work for him. There was no money at his command. He seemed like David going out with his pebble and his sling against the hosts of the Philistines. It was the battle of “the one and the fifty-three.”

He did not win at the first time of asking. Yet so great was the impression that he made that he shook the party in power. “In a fortnight, in spite of the crushing odds against him, in spite of the war fever, in spite of the Church and the brewers, wealth, influence, and the popularity of the two Tory candidates, he had shaken the Gibraltar of Toryism to its foundations.” His poll of 7,096 was the highest that had, up to that time, been given to a Socialist candidate. In 1902 he unsuccessfully contested a by-election at Wakefield, but in 1906, having returned to Blackburn, the Tories were ousted and Sir W. H. Hornby (Liberal) with 10,291 votes and Mr. Snowden with 10,282 votes were elected. It will be noticed that even at this “peak” election for Liberalism Mr. Snowden was only nine votes short of the Liberal poll.

Speaking of his victory on this occasion and coupling it with the surprising successes which had attended Labour’s efforts in other constituencies, Mr. Snowden said: “It is the vision of a regenerated society opened to the people by the teaching and preaching of the Labour and Socialist Gospel which has brought over so many of the electors to the support of Labour candidates. It was all felt and expressed to me after the declaration of the poll at Blackburn by a woman who forced herself to my side, and through her tears, joy and hope shone as she said, ‘Oh, Mr. Snowden, but you *will* fight for the poor, won’t you?’”

With his entry into Parliament in 1906 Mr. Snowden commenced a political connection with Blackburn that continued uninterrupted up to the end of 1918 when in a “Khaki

Election " that far surpassed that of 1900 for passion, fever, intolerance, and mischievous misrepresentation and abuse, he sustained a reverse that excluded him from Parliament for four years. In 1922, however, he returned to his natural sphere by being elected for the Colne Valley, where many years ago Mr. Victor Grayson scored a sensational independent Socialist victory. In the 1923 and 1924 General Elections Mr. Snowden retained his seat with increased majorities.

In his pen-picture of Mr. Snowden, which was sketched in the pre-war days, Mr. A. G. Gardiner wrote : " Constancy is a rare virtue in politics. There are few men of whom it would be safe to forecast their intellectual and political point of view ten years hence. But, whatever happens, Philip Snowden will be where he stands to-day." Lord Birkenhead, portraying the same figure after those ten years had passed, penned the following words : " Honest, visionary, implacable, a theorist in his very inconsistencies, he is a man who has fought a hard battle with life and health and won it—and in doing so has raised himself by his conspicuous courage and abilities to one of the highest places of a State in which he sees so much to disapprove." To Mr. Gardiner, Mr. Snowden seemed the man of the *idée fixe*, a Socialist *sans phrase*. He was the stuff of which revolutions are made ; he would not prune the tree, he would uproot it. He was doctrinaire and academic in the extreme ; but he fused his theories with an enthusiasm that burned at white heat. If ever there were a revolution in this country, Mr. Snowden, according to this student of political personalities, would be " Robespierre of the concentrated and remorseless purpose."

I doubt whether Mr. Gardiner would have written quite in the same strain about Mr. Snowden had his sketch been done last year ; on the other hand, I am inclined to think that Lord Birkenhead would have written very much as he did had it been done by him when Mr. F. E. Smith, K.C., M.P. The latter entered Parliament in the same year as Mr. Snowden, but he has not used to much purpose his opportunities for studying this interesting personality. To anyone who knows Mr. Snowden well and intimately, Lord Birkenhead's study is thin and unimpressive. He has remained constant, as Mr. Gardiner hazarded ; but he is neither implacable nor visionary in the sense that Lord Birkenhead used these words.

When Mr. Snowden became a Socialist, he became converted permanently. When he expounded Socialism he did

so with ardent enthusiasm and with all the fervour of the man who believed it to be the one true political and economic gospel. It has never been a question of political expediency with him: to advocate Socialism because it promised to become popular and eventually carry the party that stood for it to a place and power. He was sincere and disinterested and utterly public-spirited in his acceptance and advocacy of it. He was a living witness to the faith that was in him. But never did he contend that it could be established by a stroke of the pen, or seek to exploit the petty selfishnesses of class distinctions, or advocate a resort to revolutionary means for the attainment of Socialism. His mind is essentially a logical, reasoning, constructive mind. He has always been more concerned with building up than with pulling down. And all his public work, both in the Parliamentary arena, on the platform, as a writer, and as an agitator and educator of public opinion, has been directed to fostering an intelligent understanding of the doctrines and principles which he himself regarded as essential to the well-being of the community as a whole. No one has been more courageous or consistent in exposing the economic and social loss *to the workers themselves* that is involved by the indiscriminate use of the strike weapon than Mr. Snowden. No one has been a more determined, eloquent, and untiring advocate of international peace and reconstruction than Mr. Snowden, not from any mere academic standpoint, but from practical considerations touching the ordinary, everyday life conditions of the peoples.

As an economist he is an uncompromising believer in Free Trade, not because it is a principle or a dogma, but because he is convinced that in terms of human well-being it is the best policy for this country to have. The idea that Mr. Snowden is a cold, calculating, heartless theorist is as far from the real truth as is possible. To write of him that "He is one of those rare men who live for an idea, and who have neither aim nor ambition outside it. He would wade through slaughter to achieve it; he would go to the stake rather than surrender the least fragment of it," conveys a false impression of him. Mr. Snowden's constancy in his opposition to the frightful slaughter of 1914-1918 more than sufficiently annihilates the suggestion that he is prepared to bring trouble to others in order to advance ideas which he holds tenaciously. That he would willingly go to the stake for his beliefs is true.

His attitude during the War, which was mercilessly misrepresented, meant the enduring of public obloquy and embittered denunciation that were more than enough to break the heart and spirit of most men. But he paid this larger price with the same stern fortitude and personal indifference as, on an earlier occasion, he "bore with a dignity rare in politics" the slanders and offensive personalities of political opponents. He will pay any price himself for what he holds to be true; but he would not rack a people for any theory they did not intelligently accept, however deeply he might be convinced of its soundness and value.

It is always the well-being of the people that is uppermost in his mind: not the soundness of this or that particular principle. He is a keen prohibitionist because he believes that the moral and material life of the community would be the richer by it. His grip on fundamentals remains unshaken, but with growing experience, maturer judgment, and a larger understanding of the slow processes of democratic progress, he has become less rigid in his ideas regarding the application of principles to the facts of life. He is essentially that admirable combination—the realist and the idealist. When he was Chancellor of the Exchequer he saw to it, as far as was possible in the circumstances in which he found himself, that his Budget was based on sound financial policy. At the same time he used his opportunity to give what measure of immediate relief he could to those sections of the people upon whom taxation falls most heavily because of their varying degrees of poverty or insufficiency. He is a man to whom personal morality and public morality deserve something more than the homage of mere lip-service. He lives up to what he preaches, and he preaches what he believes in. Not even his bitterest opponents have ever accused him of being insincere. He is generally respected, trusted, and admired.

Only those who are fortunate enough to be admitted into intimate intercourse with him know how thoroughly human he is. One finds personal liking for him turning in a curious and almost imperceptible manner into deep affection. He is admired for his conspicuous abilities, respected for his sterling character, and esteemed for his single-minded concern for his fellow-citizens. He will find his place in history for two reasons, apart from others: he is one of the very small band who will always be regarded as the architects of the modern political Labour Movement; and he has proved

himself, as the first Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer, a sound and successful keeper of the nation's purse.

Whatever criticism may be directed against the first Labour Government as a whole or towards this or that particular Minister for mistakes or weaknesses or blunders it may be thought blemished the nine months' record of that Government, none, I venture to suggest, will be found to apply to Mr. Snowden in his capacity as Chancellor of the Exchequer. His work filled the Labour Movement with pride, and the public generally with confidence, admiration, and gratitude. His success is all the more striking when it is remembered that this successor of Gladstone served no apprenticeship at minor posts before he became the head of the nation's principal service. The astounding rise of this clerk of Excise to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer is a great romance, and a further proof of the unrealised powers and abilities that may be lying ready for service for the State and awaiting only the opportunity to manifest themselves.

RT. HON. J. H. THOMAS, M.P.

LABOUR'S FIRST COLONIAL SECRETARY

By A. W. TYLER

A RECORD of the main incidents in the life of a public man must needs be more or less a chronicle of the main events of the period and places in which his personality was brought into play. The activities of the Rt. Hon. J. H. Thomas, M.P., have extended over a period of some twenty years of Trade-Union and political history; and it is obvious that the task of his biographer is limited to a summary of events that ordinarily would loom large in any more extensive record of industrial, political, or national happenings.

Born in 1878, in Newport, Monmouthshire, the son of working-class parents, young Thomas led the ordinary life of a child born under such circumstances. Actually his parents had little or nothing to do with his upbringing; his father died while "Jim" Thomas was yet an infant, and his mother, through stress, was compelled to leave him to the care of his grandmother.

His earlier years were of a humdrum character, so well known to the poor, and at the age of nine the future Cabinet Minister made his first essay into the realm of industry by securing a part-time position with a Monmouth chemist named Phillips at a wage of four shillings weekly.

As time passed, the boy left school and at the age of twelve started work as a full-time employee with a firm of drapers, in which occupation, it is stated, he was not a conspicuous success, and finally found his *métier* in the more strenuous toil of the Alexandra Docks shops. It was from the docks that he first became familiar with the green monsters that drew the Great Western Railway trains, and, being in all things a typical boy, was impressed with the delights of an engine-driver's job. The fascination of the railroad became

an obsession, and without a word to his grandmother or workmates he applied for, and obtained, a position as an engine cleaner on the G.W.R.

From the date of his joining the Great Western, the career of James Henry Thomas may be said to have commenced in real earnest. Rated as an engine cleaner, his disappointment was keen at finding his first duties consisted of wandering from house to house rousing drivers and firemen who were due out with their trains at certain fixed hours. At the end of a period of novitiate, however, he achieved his first promotion in the railway service, and, abandoning his "knocking-up" duties, commenced operations as a regular cleaner in the Newport engine-sheds.

His new position permitted him actually to handle and examine at close quarters the engines which had so fascinated him, and, curiously enough, his elevation to cleaner brought him into contact with the power of the "strike weapon" for the first time. The circumstances were of a simple character. Every cleaner employed in the sheds was allowed three ounces of tallow per day by the company for his engine, and the skilful manipulation of this tallow was no small part of a cleaner's education. Probably because the application of tallow achieved merely a decorative effect upon the paintwork of the locomotive and had no bearing upon the efficient working of the mechanical parts, the authorities decided to cease issuing the grease in three-ounce quantities and the supply was cut down to two ounces. Young Thomas appealed to his youthful workmates to strike against the injustice that prevented them giving rein to their artistic instincts.

The strike of cleaners was a complete success. Mr. Thomas argued all his fellow-workmen out of the sheds, and was finally sent for by the superintendent, who attempted to cajole him into persuading the lads to return to work; but the young strike leader was firm, the ounce of tallow was conceded and the strike automatically ceased. Such was the first dispute conducted and won by the future General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, who at that time scarcely knew of the existence of a railwaymen's union.

After attaining his eighteenth birthday he was transferred to Wolverhampton as a postulant for the position of fireman; but not long after securing a place on the footplate he was again shifted, this time to Barnstaple, in North Devon, as a regular fireman at a wage of eighteen shillings per week.

It was during his stay in Barnstaple that Thomas was brought into contact with a driver who, being a keen Trade Unionist and Socialist, began to instruct his young fireman into the elements of his beliefs ; and by a strange coincidence, when Thomas was again transferred, this time back to his native Newport, he found himself working side by side with yet another Trade Unionist, who after a time so convinced Thomas that he joined the local branch, not of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, but a rival organisation, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen.

After a short membership of the A.S.L.E. & F., Thomas, examining the Trade-Union situation, came to the conclusion that sectionalism in the industry as represented by the A.S.L.E. & F., and the views that he himself held, were irreconcilable, and so left the Locomotive Society and transferred his allegiance to the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants.

The first A.S.R.S. branch secretary whom young Thomas sat under was a Newport railwayman named Charles Bradshaw, who saw the dawning of Trade-Union genius in the young fireman, and wrote him down as one who would take a more or less prominent part in Labour activities. He was ever ready to assist and advise the lad and to put him in the forefront, with the result that there was never a Trade-Union meeting in the town or neighbourhood but the young fireman was invited to attend, until he came to be regarded as one of the stock speakers.

About this time—in 1897—the North-Eastern strike had taken place, and, although not a delegate, Thomas went as a visitor to the Plymouth A.G.M., and was present during the whole of that memorable and, in many respects, painful Congress, which resulted in Mr. Harford, the then General Secretary of the A.S.R.S., being asked to resign his position. The following year, 1898, young Thomas, this time as a delegate, attended the Annual General Meeting at Leeds. He was the youngest delegate present, and was as youthful in appearance as in years, so much so that his fellow-delegates dubbed him the “ Boy of Leeds,” which name stuck to him for some time after the meeting.

In the year he was quietly married to an old playmate, Miss Agnes Hill, and, Mr. Thomas shortly afterwards being again transferred, the young couple settled down in Swindon, the new centre of the husband's activities.

Before long Mr. Thomas was taking an active part

in the politics of Swindon. He became President of the Trades Council, as he had been at Newport. He established a Labour Party in the town, and during his sojourn there he succeeded in returning to the Municipal Council an independent party of eleven members, which was called "the Labour Group," of which he was the recognised leader and spokesman.

It was about this period that Thomas was elected to the Executive Committee of the A.S.R.S., thus getting into closer touch with the brains of the organisation, whilst at the same time securing a clearer insight into its internal mechanism, experiences which he was soon to turn to profit, both for himself and the society. In 1904, at the Bradford Annual General Meeting, he was appointed President of the organisation. His triumph, however, was dimmed by the death of his eldest child, Lily, a baby of only eighteen months old.

Whilst the father and mother were comforting each other in the first poignancy of their grief, a knock came to the door. Mr. Thomas answered the summons and admitted Keir Hardie and Joseph Fell. "I have just heard of your loss," said Keir Hardie. He entered the parlour, and, confronting the bereaved couple, said with feeling, "Yours is a heavy burden; but think that we all have to bear it—live that you may meet the loved one again!" He left immediately with his companion. Who can wonder that Thomas was a valiant champion of Keir Hardie's thereafter?

The following year Thomas was re-elected President of the A.S.R.S., without opposition, and just at that time a vacancy for Organiser in the society occurred. As the result of that election, the highest vote ever recorded on such an occasion was cast, and Thomas found himself at the head of the poll with a majority of 16,000 over the whole of the other ten candidates.

Mr. Thomas then went to Manchester and took charge of the Manchester district, where he remained for a short time. His next move was back to his native Wales, and in Cardiff he formed, and was elected Chairman of, the first I.L.P. branch in that city, and having gathered a sturdy army corps around the banner of Labour, he was asked to lead it to victory in the Parliamentary campaign which was then impending. He consented, and in November 1909 entered the lists against Lord Ninian Crichton Stuart and Lord Rhondda, Tory and Liberal respectively.

Before the polling a message was received from the electors

of Derby inviting him to contest the seat that was vacant, owing to the retirement of Mr. Richard Bell, the General Secretary of the A.S.R.S., the sitting member.

The first message was received with an emphatic negative. He was not the Society's candidate, and he recommended those who had approached him to nominate the man who might be put forward by the A.S.R.S. Post-haste a second message arrived from Derby, declaring that if Thomas persisted in his refusal the seat would be lost. This decided him. For no consideration must the seat be lost. Seats were too badly needed by the A.S.R.S.; besides, the Society had spent many thousands of pounds in nursing the constituency. He fought the election, and won it, being, with Sir Thomas Roe—afterwards Lord Roe of Derby—returned as Member of Parliament for Derby. The figures given out by the Returning Officer were :

Sir T. Roe (L.)	.	.	.	.	.	10,343
J. H. Thomas (Lab.)	.	.	.	.	.	10,189
A. E. Beck (U.)	.	.	.	.	.	8,038
A. Page (U.)	.	.	.	.	.	7,953

The House of Commons was not altogether an undiscovered country to Thomas. He had been a pretty assiduous lobbyist, and from a seat "under the Gallery" he had frequently listened to debates and taken the measure of the polemical gladiators in the narrow arena below. For three weeks after his entry into the House of Commons he took no part in any of the debates, until, impelled by a statement from the front Government Bench, he rose to his feet, caught the eye of Mr. Speaker, who naturally gave preference to a new member, and launched himself into his maiden speech.

As is well known, the life of the 1910 Parliament to which Thomas was first elected did not last very long after his return to the House of Commons. In December of the same year he found himself once more in the throes of a Parliamentary contest. The poll at the second election was as follows :

Sir T. Roe (L.)	.	.	.	.	.	9,515
J. H. Thomas (Lab.)	.	.	.	.	.	9,144
A. E. Beck (U.)	.	.	.	.	.	8,160

Before the end of 1910 Mr. J. E. Williams, who had been Thomas's devoted friend from the old days in Newport, was

elected General Secretary of the A.S.R.S., and assumed office only upon the understanding that Thomas should stand as candidate for the Assistant Secretaryship. This promise Thomas faithfully carried out, and was elected assistant to his old friend at the Head Office of the Railway Servants' Union.

The year 1911 was one of feverish activity for the new Assistant General Secretary. The historic railway strike of that year brought Thomas well to the forefront of industrial affairs, and, despite the fact that he was called upon to face not only the opposition of the railway companies and to some extent the Government of the day, but within the ranks of the railway workers disaffected elements who, in a fever of revolutionary zeal, were prepared to throw him over, he succeeded in wringing official recognition of the Union from the companies, a good settlement of the dispute, and a Royal Commission to consider the whole question of conciliation; and, what was more important, brought the various unions in the railway industry together, with the result that the old A.S.R.S. was metamorphosed into the greater and stronger National Union of Railwaymen.

A serious accident at Aisgill, together with a number of minor mishaps on several lines, caused the Government in 1914 to set up a Commission to consider the whole question, under the chairmanship of Sir William Collins, M.P., who, at a later date, shared the representation of the town of Derby with Mr. Thomas.

The Commission decided that a number of members should visit the continental countries and the United States of America to obtain evidence and facts in order to assist the inquiry. Mr. Thomas was deputed to visit America and left England in August 1914; but midway between the British and American coasts, on the August Bank Holiday of 1914, Marconi's agency told of the imminence of war with Germany. The voyage, of course, was continued, and notwithstanding that before the party had set foot in America hostilities had begun in earnest, an endeavour was made to secure data as to railway conditions before returning.

Upon his return to England, Mr. Thomas threw himself whole-heartedly into prosecution of the War. His attitude has been much criticised, but nevertheless, believing as he did in the justice of the Allied cause, it would have been impossible for a man of his temperament and honesty of purpose to

take any other course than follow the dictates of his own judgment.

Thomas's views on the Conscription issue hardly need any explanation. They have been given often and in many places, and nowhere more emphatically than in the House of Commons, where he made the first and last speeches against it. He, rightly or wrongly—and to-day, in spite of criticisms, he considers rightly—took the view that conscription was the bedrock of the militarism that they were fighting, that it destroyed the spirit and the initiative of the men, and that conscripts were never as good fighters as free men enlisted through the impulse of duty. He also felt that there were people in the country who wanted conscription for conscription's sake, in addition to which they were not particular as to what happened so long as the then Prime Minister (Mr. Asquith) was got out of the way.

Although Mr. Thomas has been censured on occasions for his attitude during the War, he never permitted his views to prejudice his loyalty to those friends whom he felt were being subjected to unfair treatment and criticism by the jingoes of the day. For instance, very heated controversy raged around the personality of the later Prime Minister (the Rt. Hon. J. Ramsay MacDonald), and although Mr. Thomas had differed irreconcilably from Mr. MacDonald's attitude from the very commencement of the War, he would never permit anyone to slander the personality of Mr. MacDonald without registering a very emphatic protest.

At a meeting in Cardiff, Thomas and MacDonald were speaking from the same platform, and the proceedings were broken up by an organised band of ruffians. This demonstration, it was stated, was directed against Mr. MacDonald, and Thomas immediately replied that, opposed as he was to Mr. MacDonald's views on the War, the man had rendered too much service to the cause of Labour in the past, and was too certain to be wanted in the future to champion that cause, to be hounded out of public life by the mob tactics of political opponents, who merely sought to destroy a man greater a hundredfold than themselves.

Thomas sincerely believed that the demonstration did not reflect the feelings of the people of Cardiff. So that there might be no mistake about his view, he took one of the largest theatres and called a public meeting. The place was packed and the enthusiasm was immense. In its every aspect the

meeting was a success, and as a testimonial of the people of Cardiff they gave him another gold medallion to replace the one that had been wrenched from his watch-chain by one of the predatory "patriots" at the previous meeting. It bore the inscription :

"Presented to J. H. Thomas, M.P., by friends of freedom of speech, to commemorate his fight to vindicate that right at Cardiff on 16th November, 1916."

Shortly afterwards, in 1916, the Liberal Government fell and was replaced by the Coalition, headed by Mr. Lloyd George, and an offer was made to Mr. Thomas to join the Cabinet. For the moment he may have been tempted by the offer, for the office carried with it a substantial salary and all the hope of future political preferment; but he had no hesitation in refusing the offer, stating his belief that he could best serve the interests of his country, his constituency, and his class by remaining outside the Administration.

At this juncture Mr. J. E. Williams, the beloved chief of the N.U.R., resigned his office owing to failing health. Thomas was nominated for the vacant General Secretaryship, and the members of the N.U.R. showed their lively appreciation of his services by electing him to the position by a clear majority of nearly 75,000 votes.

When he was elected to the chief executive position of the N.U.R., Thomas was forty-two years of age and the responsibilities that faced him were enormous. The Union was a big one. It embraced not only all grades in the railway services in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, but it was in close association with other vast organisations, being part of that which was known as the Triple Alliance. This institution was composed of the Miners, the Railwaymen, and the Transport Workers of the country, and had a full-strength membership of close upon 1,500,000 workers. The trades represented were amongst the most important in the country, their work dealing as it did with the arteries and life's blood of the nation's activities.

When America came into the War it was obvious that there were many problems of common interest between the two countries to be mutually discussed, and the Government accordingly decided that Mr. A. J. Balfour (now Lord Balfour), the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, should head a Mission to the United States, accompanied by naval and military authorities and others, in order to confer with the

Government of that country. The American Federation of Labour, who had already charged themselves to stand by the Government in the prosecution of the War, felt that no Mission would be complete which did not include representatives of organised Labour. Mr. Samuel Gompers, the well-known American Labour leader, urged President Wilson to suggest that Labour should be represented on the Commission. The Prime Minister thereupon invited Thomas and the Rt. Hon. C. W. Bowerman, M.P., to form the Labour Deputation. Conferences were held in all the great cities of the U.S.A., and, in addition to these gatherings, the members of this Mission addressed mass meetings in numerous places. But memorable as the meetings proved, there was one other which excelled in the depth of the impression which it made on the minds of the "Britishers," and that was when the Englishmen were invited to address the American War Cabinet. Thomas spoke on this occasion for over fifty minutes, and when he had finished Mr. Balfour was the first to rush over to him and congratulate him on the forcefulness of his address.

Probably few visitors to the United States, certainly none belonging to the ranks of Labour, ever had such an interesting and varied experience as Thomas on this memorable trip. Not only did he fraternise with the Labour leaders, but he was privileged to meet the President on several occasions and to discuss the War and industrial problems with him.

When Thomas landed at Liverpool on his return to England, a pleasant surprise was awaiting him in the shape of an announcement that he had been made a Privy Councillor. One of the first to congratulate him was the Rt. Hon. A. J. Balfour, his whilom colleague, and all the other members of the Mission followed suit. The story of the receipt of this new dignity would not be complete unless it were related that when he went to Buckingham Palace to be invested by the King, German aeroplanes were over London dropping bombs, and he remarked to the Earl of Rosebery, who was present, that it only required one of these bombs to drop in the Palace yard to grace the ceremony and make it additionally interesting and memorable. It is doubtful whether the Earl shared the right honourable gentleman's opinion.

Derby stood loyally by Mr. Thomas again at the General Election which followed the Armistice in 1918, and after a short campaign in the constituency the polling figures read :

J. H. Thomas	.	.	.	.	.	.	25,145
Green (Ind. U.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	14,920
Rowbotham (L.)	.	.	.	.	.	.	13,408
Smith	.	.	.	.	.	.	13,012

Immediately following the General Election, Thomas's time was fully occupied with the negotiations arising out of the N.U.R. application for the introduction of the national eight-hour day on British railways, and finally, on 30th January, 1919, the National Agreement was signed, and another chapter had been added to the history of railway unionism in this country.

No sooner had Mr. Thomas returned from a meeting of the "International" which he had attended at Berne than he was engaged in another industrial struggle, this time on the Tube railways, where numbers of motormen on both underground and electric trains on the L.B. & S.C.R. "came out" in an unauthorised strike in relation to the new eight-hour agreement. Once again Mr. Thomas had to play the unpopular rôle of "candid friend," pleading with his own members for loyalty to the agreement. In situations of this kind Thomas, throughout his whole career, has never hesitated to take a stand for his principles, even in the teeth of a tempest of opposition; it would have been easy on many occasions to have gone with the tide of popular feeling, but such is the essential "bigness" of the man, that, scorning opportunism, he has fought to a finish any movement that, in his considered judgment, was likely to do harm to the men whom he represented.

The following September saw the commencement of the famous 1919 railway strike, and without entering into the details of that historic dispute, it will be remembered that the full burden of those anxious eleven days fell upon Mr. Thomas's shoulders. Meeting after meeting he addressed with seeming inexhaustible energy, and towards the end of the period his conduct of the negotiations for a settlement was so masterly as to draw expressions of admiration from the very men he was fighting.

On 31st March, 1920, a fateful meeting of the Triple Alliance was held at Unity House to discuss what action should be taken regarding the dispute in the mining industry which had arisen by the action of the mine owners in locking out the employees through the latter's refusal to accept a reduction of wages, and, briefly, it was agreed that sympathetic

action should be taken by the N.U.R. and Transport Workers to support the Miners, and a strike of the Triple Alliance, with its almost unthinkable consequences, seemed imminent on April 15th.

At the last moment, however, the Miners repudiated the action of their Secretary, Mr. Frank Hodges, who in a speech at the House of Commons had pledged the Federation to agree to a temporary settlement under certain specific conditions. Obviously it was hopeless to expect a spontaneous and united response to a strike call, from the rank and file of the Transport Workers and the N.U.R., to many of whom the action of the Miners seemed unreasonable. Consequently the strike notices to the two constituent parties in the Alliance were withdrawn on the Friday night, after hours of discussion.

The vilification and abuse that showered upon Thomas's head after "Black Friday" reached its climax in an infamous attack in the *Communist*. As a result Mr. Thomas was forced, in defence of his personal honour, to bring a libel action against the editor and proprietors of the journal. The outcome of the action was the assessing of £2,000 damages in Mr. Thomas's favour, which, when paid, he devoted wholly to working-class charities, and, ironically enough, having regard to the political beliefs of the people who had attacked him, a portion to a fund for the relief of starving and destitute victims in Soviet Russia!

Industrial events, coupled with his manifold duties as President of the International Federation of Trades Unions, and his chairmanship of the Trades Union Congress in 1921, all kept Mr. Thomas busy until the General Election of 1922, when the Coalition Government met its Waterloo, and the Tory Administration took office under the late Mr. Bonar Law, whose universally deplored death placed the Rt. Hon. Stanley Baldwin into office the following year.

With the fall of the Tory Government on the Protection issue at the end of 1923, Labour hopes rose, and when it was seen to be inevitable that the Labour Party would assume office, speculation instantly ran high as to the assignment of Mr. J. H. Thomas in the new administration. He had again been successfully returned for Derby, and after Mr. Ramsay MacDonald visited the King (accompanied by Messrs. J. H. Thomas, J. R. Clynes, and Arthur Henderson) and accepted the responsibility of forming a Government, the position of Mr. Thomas in the Cabinet was assured. Later,

when the announcement was made, it was with universal approbation that the country learned of his appointment as Secretary of State for the Colonies. Thus it came about that the youngster who had polished brasses in the chemist's shop in Monmouthshire, and who had visualised the footplate of a G.W.R. locomotive as the height of human ambition, became one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State.

Since the accession of the Labour Party to office, the Rt. Hon. J. H. Thomas's contribution to the general welfare and progress of the Government is so recent as to preclude comment in these pages, let it be sufficient to say that at least on two occasions his eloquence and parliamentary ability has extricated the Labour Party from impending difficulties, and his whole-hearted enthusiasm for the success of the British Empire Exhibition, for which, as Colonial Secretary, he was partially responsible, is without precedent in the annals of those who have held similar office. All sections of the Press united in declaring him as one of the outstanding and brilliant successes of the Administration, and such approbation is praise indeed, in view of the usual attitude taken by English newspapers towards Labour leaders.

In conclusion, a word as to the man himself, as apart from the Cabinet Minister and Railwaymen's leader.

Physically he gives no indication of the ego that is hidden in the cosmos of the remarkable man that he is. Of medium height and undistinguished feature, one would pass him in the street without remark; but to know the man, as has been the privilege of the writer for a number of years, is to have revealed the tremendous qualities that have gone to contribute to his transition from the bottom to the top of the social scale. Without influence or the advantages of education, he has, always subjugating himself to the needs of his own people, risen to the highest honours that his country can bestow upon her sons. Cabinet Minister, Doctor of Laws of the University of Cambridge, Member of Parliament, Justice of the Peace, the trusted friend of Kings, Peers, and People, James Henry Thomas feels proud, to use his own words, "to live under a Constitution which enables a humble boy with a meagre education, surrounded by poverty, to become in so short a time one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State."

RT. HON. TOM SHAW, M.P.

MR. TOM SHAW has been described as one of the best-read men in the Labour Movement; the compliment, grudgingly conceded by an anonymous commentator trained to believe that no sort of culture could descend to the workers without an infringement of the divine copyright of the comfortable classes, is, notwithstanding, no less authentic than deserved. It is, indeed, intrinsically equivalent to high praise, in view of the intellectual status which the Labour Movement has from its inception enjoyed, and helps to dispose of the ill-balanced superstition that there is no kind of temperament which will enable a man to become eminent both as a Trade Unionist and as a Labour intellectual.

Circumstances confined the play of Mr. Tom Shaw's ambitions, in the first instance, to the sphere of Trade Unionism. He was born in 1872 at Colne, in Lancashire, his father being a miner, and had his early education at the national schools of the town. He took kindly to the task of learning, and although obliged by economic conditions to enter the cotton mills as a half-timer at the age of ten, he contrived to continue his education at night-schools and technical classes. A mind naturally endowed with progressive instincts was quickened by reading and reflection, and he began to be listened to by his workmates as one entitled by knowledge and intellectual capacity to leadership in all movements towards the emancipation of the working-class. He was not twenty-one when he became an official of the Colne Workers' Association, but his aptitude for responsibilities had already been clearly evinced, and nobody who had watched his career was surprised at the thoroughness with which he achieved tasks which demanded in an exceptional degree the qualities of tact and endurance. When, largely through his own unremitting efforts, the Northern Counties Textile Trades Federation came into being, he became secretary of the new formation, an appoint-

ment which, by its nature, largely extended his prestige and influence in the Trade-Union Movement.

Throughout these busy years he had contrived to find time for the study of languages, a branch of learning which he found attractive in itself, though its primary claim on his attention arose out of his interest in the progress and prospects of international Trade Unionism. In 1911 the International Textile Association found itself bereft of a secretary by the death of the late Will Marsland, and Mr. Tom Shaw, nominated by the textile unions of this country, was chosen as his successor. His knowledge of international affairs from the workers' point of view was largely expanded by the fresh contacts which his work in this connection entailed, while his renown, when it was seen how efficiently he tackled his new responsibilities, began to take on aspects which gave him a standing of his own among the intellectuals of the Labour and Socialist Movements. In 1921 international relationships, badly divided by the War, began to reintegrate, and there was a rally of working-class elements to form the body known as the Second International as a focus from which to direct essential activities against the newly released forces of Reaction and Revolution. Such an organisation needed in a directing capacity a man on whose knowledge, sagacity, and courage they could rely, and they found their man in Mr. Shaw. He held the joint secretaryship with Mr. Friedrich Adler for three years, till in the early part of 1924 he was called to assist in the Counsels of the First Labour Government of Great Britain in the capacity of Minister of Labour.

To this native eminence he had come by a path parallel to that which had led him so far and brought him to so high an altitude in the sphere of internationalism. The realities of the workers' lives were ever present to one bred in a working-class environment, and his grasp of essential facts, combined with a ready apprehension of the true significance of figures, enabled him to attain to a rare knowledge, at once extensive and particular, of the conditions governing the lives of the masses.

His victory at Preston, in the General Election of 1918, was largely due to his mastery of the real facts of the situation, and during the six years of Parliamentary life that intervened between then and the advent of Labour to office, he was able to take close stock of the application of legislative measures to large-scale industrial problems.

His appointment to the Ministry put him to a severe test. Unemployment was the prime evil of the day, and the search for a sovereign remedy was rendered more arduous and soul-straining by the bitterly partisan views which inevitably, as it seemed, came to be involved in all discussions of the topic. Shaw had been director of National Services in the West Midland area region during the War, and understood very well the nature of the difficulties likely to crop up before any thorough-going remedial measure could be made effective: there were risks to which he felt he could not commit a minority Government, which could hold office only so long as it refrained from offending the political prejudices of its opponents. In this predicament his steady-going sagacity looked like ineptitude to the eager proponents of drastic reform, and was wilfully misunderstood and misinterpreted by the supercilious critics in Opposition. It can hardly be denied that his conduct in office did disappoint a great many people who never clearly comprehended that their disappointment was due not to the Minister, but to the circumstances which shackled his activities. Those who expected most and were correspondingly the most disappointed were, perhaps inevitably, those who were most prone to overlook the real and important reforms that actually were achieved, the chief among them being the abolition of the "gap" period of three weeks during which persons entitled to unemployment insurance benefit were, under the previous Act, thrown on the tender mercies of the Poor-Law regulations. Other measures framed and carried through by the Labour Minister of Labour considerably improved the rates and allowances made to unemployed workers, and it is no more than fair to say that during the short regime of the Labour Government—not nine months in all—there was no member of the Cabinet who worked more assiduously to fulfil the heavy tasks of the time than the sturdy ex-mill hand from the north.

The Labour Government fell in October 1924, and Mr. Tom Shaw was free to resume those functions which, on taking office as a Minister of the Crown, he had as a matter of course relinquished. The Labour and Socialist International—the final evolutionary phase of the Second International—received him back as Secretary, while he became a candidate once more for the Secretaryship of the Northern Counties Textile Trades Federation. In 1925 he returned to his earlier position as Secretary of the International Association of

Textile Workers and resigned his office as Secretary of the Labour and Socialist International.

A good many portentous things might feasibly be prophesied of this active champion of the common people. A safe thing to say is that his future as far as can be discerned is likely to be preoccupied chiefly with international affairs. Whatever his destiny may find for him to do one thing is certain : it will be done with that energy and sagacity which have throughout a notable career carried him again and again to leadership in the vital movements of his time.

RT. HON. SIDNEY WEBB, M.P.

LABOUR'S FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE

BY A FELLOW-FABIAN

IN 1879 when Bernard Shaw, then comparatively a new-comer in London, was eagerly seeking to find himself and to discover for what purpose he had been sent into the world, he joined a body called the Zetetical Society, a debating club, which had been founded to discuss political and social questions. A few weeks after becoming a member Shaw's interest was keenly aroused in a speaker who took part in one of the debates. "The speaker was a young man of about twenty-one, rather below middle height, with small pretty hands and feet, and a profile that suggested, on account of the nose and imperial, an improvement on Napoleon the Third." Shaw continues the description of the man and the incident as follows: "He had a fine forehead, a long head, eyes that were built on top of two highly developed organs of speech (according to the phrenologists), and remarkably thick, strong dark hair. He knew all about the subject of the debate; knew more than the lecturer; knew more than anybody present; had read everything that had ever been written on the subject; and remembered all the facts that bore on it. He used notes, read them, ticked them off one by one, threw them away, and finished with a coolness and clearness that, to me in my then trembling state, seemed miraculous. This young man was the ablest man in England—Sidney Webb."

In this characteristic manner Shaw tells of his first meeting with the man with whom he was to work for many years in the closest and most loyal co-operation for the spread of sane Socialist doctrines in Great Britain, and who shared with him the leadership of the Fabian Society in the days when its reputation was founded and its many creative activities were in full tide. It was in accordance with the eternal fitness of things that Shaw should have made the acquaintance of Webb

at a society of this kind, because the obtaining and the giving of social and political knowledge may be said to be the chief passions of the two men.

At the time when Sidney Webb made such a strong and lasting impression upon his future famous colleague he was twenty years of age. His education had been of an unusual kind. He had attended private schools in Germany and Switzerland as well as in London, finishing his student period as a youth (he would claim to be still a student at sixty-five) at the Birkbeck Institute, City of London College, and University of London. Hence his educational training suited his essentially modern and positive type of mind, which has nothing about it of the attitude of "nothing is new, nothing is true, and nothing matters," which is alleged to be the result of the teaching of certain of our more ancient centres of learning.

Sidney Webb's studies were at first used for strictly business purposes—that is to say, for the purposes of securing a livelihood. From sixteen to nineteen years of age he was a clerk in a colonial broker's office in the city. In 1878 he entered the Civil Service by open competition and became a Lower Division Clerk in the War Office. Again by open competition he gained in 1879 the post of Surveyor of Taxes, which he retained until 1881, when by the same process he obtained the position of clerk (Class I) in the Colonial Office. Here he had Sydney Olivier, later a brother-in-arms in Fabian political campaigning, as a colleague.

The problem of his material existence having been satisfactorily settled, Sidney Webb was now free to devote his leisure to the task of equipping himself for that long and distinguished career of public service which is already a matter of history. He mastered the complex science of political economy, taking for his guide John Stuart Mill, of whom he remains a firm admirer. He began to practise the art of exposition by acting as honorary lecturer on economics at the Working Men's College, then situated in Great Ormond Street. Here was developed the gift of fluent speech and orderly marshalling of fact and argument, the exercise of which at the Zetetical Society aroused the admiration and amazement of Bernard Shaw, and which has been a potent influence in shaping political and economic thought in England during the last thirty years.

In 1885 Sidney Webb joined the Fabian Society, then a

little more than twelve months old. Sydney Olivier also became a member at the same time. The Society was at this early stage not very clear as to what it wanted or how it should set to work. Its discussions were mainly on things abstract or Utopian. The members were very much up in the clouds and flying in different groups towards different points of the horizon. Sidney Webb brought them down to earth and, partnered by Shaw, succeeded in getting them to adopt a coherent policy. This, of course, was not done in a moment. It took time to convince the ardent Fabian reformers that it was necessary to build theories on a basis of fact, and that methods must be adapted to circumstances. Sidney Webb went about the business in his customary thorough and systematic fashion. He used the much-discussed policy of permeation on the Society itself until gradually and almost unconsciously unity in thought and action was practically established and what has since become the Fabian tradition began to take definite form. His first lecture to the Society was given two months before he became a member. Its title, "The Way Out," indicates the essentially constructive nature of his mind, which, although capable of merciless analysis and criticism of the existing social system, has little use for criticism which is destructive and nothing else. Criticism with Sidney Webb is simply the necessary preliminary step towards the formulation of definite and detailed plans for fundamental reform. His first Fabian Tract, No. 5, *Facts for Socialists*, was issued in 1887. This collection of eloquent statistics, which has had an enormous circulation and has been reprinted many times, and is still on sale, gave a new stamp to the Society's publications. Henceforward they became the Socialist's chief source of reliable data and logical argument in support of his cause. Mere rhetorical denunciation of capitalist society disappeared from the pages of the tracts, and in its place there appeared the clearly stated results of scientific thought and research.

Facts for Socialists was the first of many pamphlets for which Sidney Webb was responsible. For a number of years he was the most prolific Fabian author. Of the list of more than two hundred tracts which the Fabian Society has published he is responsible for far more than any other member. And when a tract was not written by him, he often inspired its writer to undertake the task of authorship and assisted him out of his great store of knowledge and experience.

The valuable qualities of Sidney Webb were quickly recognised by the young Fabians, and, in 1886, they elected him to the Executive Committee of the Society, a position he has occupied without a break until the present day. From the moment he entered into office his remarkable talent for managing committees and his amazing industry gave him a supremacy in the counsels of the Society which was shared only by Bernard Shaw. Sidney Webb was the inventor and the chief organiser of the policy of permeation, and, according to Bernard Shaw, played such "bewildering conjuring tricks with the Liberal thimbles and the Fabian peas that . . . both the Liberals and the Sectarian Socialists stand aghast at him." The most striking outcome of this policy was the adoption by the National Liberal Federation in 1891 of the, at the time, celebrated Newcastle programme, which created considerable perturbation in old-fashioned Liberal circles.

Sidney Webb's ability was, however, soon to find a larger sphere of operation. In 1888 the London County Council came into existence, and the metropolis, hitherto a congeries of amorphous and inert aggregations of population almost without any common municipal life, began to show signs of civic consciousness. Here was an opportunity for Fabian initiative admirably suited to Sidney Webb's genius. He promptly produced Fabian Tract No. 8, *Facts for Londoners*, fifty-five pages of packed statistics, "an exhaustive collection of statistical and other facts, relating to the metropolis, with suggestions for reform on Socialist principles." The tract was a veritable storehouse of information, until then uncollated, concerning the area, population, rating, public services, local government, and educational institutions of the greatest city in the world. It was the first of many documents relating to municipal questions published by the Society, which from 1889 paid special attention to such matters and thereby created the movement in favour of Municipal Socialism.

Having demonstrated that he knew all about London and its problems, Sidney Webb resigned from the Civil Service in 1891 and stood as candidate for the London County Council for Deptford in 1892. Just previously he had published a volume in the once well-known "Social Science" series of Swan Sonnenschein, entitled *The London Programme*, which set out his municipal policy and that of the Fabian Society. He was returned at the head of the poll with 4,088 votes, his colleague receiving 2,503.

The London County Council election and the others which followed it during the next sixteen years, in all of which he kept his seat with satisfactory majorities, brought out another side of Sidney Webb's personality—the consummate electioneerer. He has never concealed his Socialist opinions, but his powers of persuasion, his tact, his toleration of other people's views, his evident disinterestedness, and the absence from his speeches of any personal attack upon his opponents, together with his complete mastery of the issues of the contest and the ease with which he can deal with any question or questioner, secured for him support from most unexpected quarters. For instance, no one is less like a "sportsman" either in habit or appearance than Sidney Webb, who states that his one recreation is walking. Yet at one London County Council election, when some absurd issue was raised about a threatened restriction of "sport" by the Council, a body with a name something like the "Sportsman League," and with strong Conservative tendencies, waited upon him to ascertain his views on this momentous subject. He received the deputation with his usual affability, listened to them with becoming gravity, and then gave them an address on "sport" which must have aroused their enthusiasm for his candidature, for the next day every public-house in Deptford contained a bill appealing to the electors to "Vote for Webb, the British Sportsman!" Those who were aware of his long record in electioneering at Deptford had no doubt as to the result of the Seaham election of 1922.

An account of his activities on the London County Council during the promising period when the Progressives were busily engaged in repairing the neglect of decades and attempting to make the Londoner feel that he was a citizen of no mean city would make a lengthy story. His skill as an administrator, his talent for committee work, and his ingenuity in planning schemes had full scope. Much that he accomplished for the benefit of London is unknown and will never be known except to the small company of his immediate associates, for it was done not in the glare of publicity, but in the committee-rooms at Spring Gardens, where he was unequalled either as a chairman or as an ordinary member. Those of us who have had the experience of his committee chairmanship had the privilege of learning under a master how public business could be conducted with the least possible friction and the greatest possible dispatch. His fertility in suggestion, his rapid

solution of apparently insoluble difficulties, his patience and tact in dealing with opposition, both ignorant and instructed, his capacity for getting his own way without arousing resentment in the minds of those who disagreed with him, his power of converting his opponents to his views, his persistence and dexterity in discussion when the odds were against him, enabling him to gain his point when defeat seemed practically certain, earned the admiration and respect not only of his friends, but even of his most bitter and suspicious political enemies.

One instance of his persuasiveness is worth recording. For a number of years he was a representative of the London County Council on the Board of Governors of the Imperial College of Science and Technology at South Kensington. It was an august body, consisting of a selection of the most distinguished and learned men of Great Britain. I was then its most humble and obscure member. Its deliberations were very slow and stately; the great personages, full of years and dignities, were like great warships in a narrow, crowded harbour, unable to move except with great caution and care to avoid collision. On one occasion a matter of great importance to the College was discussed in the absence of Sidney Webb. A decision was practically agreed upon, but at the last moment it was thought best to take the formal vote upon it at the following meeting. Sidney Webb, considering the decision to be wrong, attended this meeting, and before the matter was put to the vote spoke for half an hour, giving a multitude of reasons why the decision should be reconsidered. He swung the majority round to his opinion and, as a crowning mercy, he brought Lord Halsbury, then a hale and hearty die-hard of over seventy, to his feet with a speech in his support! It was a striking incident, this agreement between the adroit and subtle Socialist and the downright, bluff last hope of ancient Toryism. But I doubt whether anyone present, excepting myself, saw anything strange in the almost hypnotic power which Sidney Webb had exercised over his noble and learned colleagues.

Sidney Webb as a London County Councillor was interested mainly in education. He was chairman or vice-chairman on the Council's Technical Education Board from its foundation in 1893 almost continuously until the Board was abolished in 1904, and its functions merged into those of the Council as the Education Authority for London. He drew up a plan

for the reform of the whole system of national education which was published in 1901 by the Fabian Society as Tract No. 106, under the title of *The Education Muddle and the Way Out*. The plan set forth in the tract is substantially the system of administration established by the Education Act of 1902, which caused considerable division of opinion not only in the Fabian Society, but also in the Labour and Socialist Movement generally. Sidney Webb was rightly or wrongly held to be the real author of the Act. How far this belief was correct it is impossible to say, but the authorities at Whitehall were so anxious to see the Fabian scheme that they were supplied with proofs before publication. Sidney Webb was not concerned with the religious quarrels which were, unfortunately, bound up with the Education question; he was anxious to bring to children of parents of all denominations improved facilities for secular instruction, and he used all the power and influence at his command to this end. When the Education Act of 1902, which dealt with London, was passed, he wrote another tract (No. 114), *The Education Act, 1902: How to make the Best of It*, which gave full and clear explanations of the measure. He also published in book form a defence of the Act and an appeal to the religious factions to sink their differences in the interest of the training of the nation's children.

Time has shown that Sidney Webb's policy was wise and statesmanlike. Opportunities for education, elementary, higher, and technical, are now far greater than under the old system of School Boards, excellent though these bodies were in the performance of their duties. For more than a decade the religious difficulty has slumbered, and it would appear that Sidney Webb's alleged permeation of the Conservative Party on behalf of Education has provided a permanent solution to an exceedingly vexed question.

One other effort in the field of Education on the part of Sidney Webb must be mentioned. In 1894 a member of the Fabian Society, Henry Hutchinson, left to Sidney Webb and four other members of the Society, as trustees, the sum of nearly £10,000. The trustees decided to devote a portion of the money to initiating the London School of Economics and Political Science. Their object was to get taught the best science that could be obtained, and to get it taught on modern lines. The School, which was started in a modest way in the Adelphi, has, under the guidance of Sidney Webb, flourished

exceedingly, and is now an important branch of the University of London, with a reputation which draws to it students from the four quarters of the globe. It has certainly more than justified the hopes of its founder, who probably derives more satisfaction from its success than from any of the numerous other things he has accomplished for the benefit of the community.

While he was immersed in politics, and later in the multifarious and complex details of the government of London, Sidney Webb was steadily acquiring fame as an economist, historian, and expert on social and industrial questions. But from 1892 onwards his forces were doubled by his marriage with Miss Beatrice Potter. The partnership which has resulted is unique in the history of both authorship and social service. It has produced a series of monumental works which are recognised throughout the world as authoritative on the subjects with which they treat. So close indeed has been the co-operation between these two gifted people that it is now almost impossible to think of one of them apart from the other.

Mrs. Sidney Webb before her marriage had already displayed that remarkable genius for research, capacity, luminous exposition, and untiring zeal for social reform which have made her name, with that of her husband, a household word in the Labour and Socialist Movement and gained for her distinction in academic and learned spheres. She had assisted in the great inquiry made by Charles Booth into London life and labour, and published a short history and description of the Co-operative Movement which is now a classic. Endowed with a clear and penetrating mind, unusual creative and executive force, she is in the front rank of notable living Englishwomen; for intellectual power and knowledge of affairs she is undoubtedly the first among them.

There is no need to recount in detail the list of famous books by which Sidney and Beatrice Webb have added to the knowledge of mankind. They are too well known to require recapitulation. *The History of Trade Unionism* gave to the world for the first time the story of the growth of the working-class organisations which are the basis and the source of the massive strength of the modern British political and social Labour Movement and the embodiments of the dogged, persistent, practical spirit of the English working-classes, the spirit that in its search for ideals refuses to lose touch with reality, and while endeavouring to make a new social order

refuses to break entirely with the old. The great work on local government contained in the two volumes *The Parish and the County* and *The Manor and the Borough* throws a new light upon the development of municipal institutions and the organised life of the countryside. The scholarship displayed in these masterpieces of research and historical judgment is amazing in its scope and depth, and is of itself sufficient to give the authors a great reputation as historians in a field which hitherto had received comparatively little attention from English students. Allied to these volumes are others on *Statutory Authorities for Special Purposes*, *The Story of the King's Highway*, and *English Prisons under Local Government*.

Turning from the past to the present and future, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, in *A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain*, have grappled with the complicated political and economic problems of the modern State, analysed them with masterly skill, and set forth practical proposals for the reorganisation of British industry and government on a Socialist foundation. The grasp of detail and the ingenuity in the invention of legislative and administrative machinery shown in this remarkable document make it an invaluable contribution to political thought. Another book by these tireless investigators and writers must be mentioned, *The Consumers' Co-operative Movement*, a companion volume to *The History of Trade Unionism*, an appreciative and at the same time critical study of the achievements and activities of the movement to the present day, together with a forecast of the probable lines of its future. Here again in the pages of this big work are not only fullness and accuracy in the presentation of facts, but also constructive imagination which lifts it far above the level of the ordinary record or chronicle.

Among the many notable works to be found in the list and which deserve special notice are those dealing with the English Poor-Law system and the problem of destitution. Both Sidney and Beatrice Webb have been members of numerous Royal Commissions and Departmental Committees and have made their mark on all of them. But the most memorable performance of both in this field of activity was in connection with the Poor-Law Commission appointed in 1905, which sat for four years and issued its Report in 1909. Mrs. Sidney Webb was a member of the Commission and from the first took a prominent part in its proceedings. In

fact, in the words of Bernard Shaw, "she played the chairman, Lord George Hamilton, completely off the stage." The investigations of the Commission gave her and Sidney Webb a great opportunity to put forward proposals for dealing with the deplorable conditions which, it was proved, the Poor Law entirely failed to meet. Of this they took full advantage. Together they drafted and issued a Minority Report, which completely eclipsed that of the majority of the Commission and in which the existing Poor-Law system was smitten hip and thigh and a carefully-thought-out scheme to replace its wasteful and ineffective methods was drawn up in detail. They organised the National Committee for the Prevention of Destitution to carry on propaganda in favour of the proposals of the Minority Report. This body was exceedingly active for a number of years, but it failed to achieve full success owing to the obstinate resistance of the Local Government Board to drastic change and the diversion of public interest towards the question of Health Insurance. Nevertheless, the Poor Law has never recovered from the shock to its prestige it received from the attacks of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, and it is one of the subjects that will be dealt with by the Labour Party when the opportune moment arrives. It may be truly said that the system of relieving instead of preventing distress and dire need has now no supporters who carry weight with the public. This situation has been largely created by the Minority Report and the agitation in its favour for which its authors were responsible.

One incident in connection with the agitation brings out the resourcefulness of Sidney Webb, especially as a propagandist. When his wife and he printed the Minority Report, they lent the Fabian Society the plates for the purpose of printing a cheap edition. Thereupon the Treasury Solicitor threatened the Society with an injunction on the ground of infringement of Crown copyright and demanded the instant withdrawal of the cheap edition. Sidney Webb promptly pointed out that the copyright belonged to him, as, although he was not a member of the Poor Law Commission, the Minority Report was written with his own hand! Further, that the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, a score of years previously, had published a declaration in which they expressly disclaimed their privilege of copyright monopoly so far as ordinary Blue-books were concerned, and actually encouraged the reprinting of them for the public advantage. The attempt

to suppress the popular circulation of the Report would have been an excellent advertisement; but the Treasury Solicitor found he was mistaken and had to climb down. The Government then published a still cheaper edition, with the result that the Minority Report obtained a huge circulation, which naturally gave great satisfaction to the authors.

I have said that Sidney Webb has little use for criticism which is destructive and nothing else. This statement must to a certain slight extent be qualified. After devoting years of strenuous thought and labour "to municipal administration, to research into the facts of social organisation, and to devising and advocating measures by which the existing profit-making system may be replaced with the least political friction and the most considerate treatment of 'established expectations,' by a scientific reorganisation of industry as a democratically controlled public service," he has, in conjunction with his wife, considered that he might "without misgiving or malice, tell capitalism plainly what History will think of it when all the demagogues of our day are dead and gone." No two persons living are more justified or qualified to speak on this theme. As they remark, they "have no mind for denials without affirmations, for demolitions that provide for no constructions." They have devised constructions—which the more revolutionary combative Socialist calls "palliatives"—to an extent unequalled by any other Socialist thinker; they have mapped out the path towards the realisation of social ideals with a clearness which is apparent to every seeker after a better social order. And then, having earned the right to judge, they have passed judgment on the old order which they have sought to change. In *The Decay of Capitalist Civilisation* will be found the most deadly and convincing exposure of the evils of the capitalist system that has appeared since *Das Kapital*. Yet even here the purpose is really constructive. One feels that the book was written not simply to condemn, but to rouse the desire in the reader to help to regenerate society and imbue it with the Socialist spirit.

Sidney Webb's connection with the Labour Party began, so to speak, before it was born. He was joint author with Bernard Shaw of the article entitled "To your tents, O Israel!" which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* of November 1893 and in which the workers were advised to abandon Liberalism and form a party of their own. It is related elsewhere how this advice was gradually accepted by the bulk

of the Trade Unionists, taught by experience that industrial organisation alone was a sword without a shield. Sidney Webb did not take an active part in the events which led up to the formation of the Labour Party nor in its early career. He was engrossed with his work as an administrator at the London County Hall and his literary pursuits. But twenty-three years after the publication of the *Fortnightly Review* article, which was expanded into Fabian Tract No. 49, *A Plan of Campaign for Labour*, he became a member of the Executive Committee of the Party as representative of the Fabian Society when I resigned from the position on entering the army. To what extent he is responsible for the rapid strides the party has made during and since the War is known only to those who have been closely associated with him during the past eight years. But it is certain that his vast experience in administration, immense knowledge of public affairs, extraordinary skill as an organiser and committee expert, have been invaluable in the task of making the Labour Party efficient enough to undertake the Government of the British Empire. His period of chairmanship of the party was fittingly closed by his remarkably able and prophetic address at the Party Conference of 1923, which was appropriately entitled "Labour on the Threshold." Six months later the party had crossed the threshold, and if it has not yet taken full possession of the palace of power, it occupied the main apartments.

Sidney Webb has never expressed any desire to enter the House of Commons or to win parliamentary honours. He was the Labour candidate for the London University in 1918 simply in order to demonstrate that his party had support among brain-workers as well as among those who are usually known by the term "working-class." When he consented to become the Labour candidate for Seaham for the following election at the pressing invitation of the miners of the constituency, it was from a sense of duty and not with the object of satisfying personal ambition—a characteristic he entirely lacks. But having agreed to stand, he conducted his campaign with the thoroughness for which his name is a synonym. He wrote *A History of the Durham Miners* for the instruction of his prospective constituents; his election speeches were educational discourses, full of information and ripe political wisdom; and his election machinery was built up with meticulous care. The result of the Seaham contest in 1922, although not altogether astonishing to his friends

who are aware of his proficiency in the art of electioneering, evidently staggered *The Times*, which gave his five-figure majority over his Conservative opponent as four naughts! By the time the election of 1923 had taken place the premier newspaper had recovered its reason, for Sidney Webb's still larger majority of that year is given with complete accuracy in its columns.

As President of the Board of Trade, Sidney Webb had many knotty questions to answer in the House of Commons. A study of Hansard shows that he was always alert and ready to tackle the conundrums prepared for him by opponents, and even the skilfully contrived supplementary query rarely got past his guard. From the point of view of administration there has probably never been a more efficient Minister in the office he holds, and nothing is more certain than that his term of stewardship added to the prestige of the Labour Party not only in the country generally, but in the business world which is his chief province.

A man cannot attain the eminence which Sidney Webb has reached in several spheres without becoming the subject of legends, flattering and otherwise. It has been rumoured, for instance, that he has read all the books in the London Library, not to speak of those in the Library of the London School of Economics. This is simply an exaggerated statement of the fact that he is a voracious reader who absorbs information as easily as he breathes. This habit of reading is so strong that on one of his voyages round the world—for Sidney Webb has seen and studied most important countries more than once—during a long sea-journey, having exhausted his own stock of reading matter, he made friends with the chief engineer of the ship, borrowed his supply of technical magazines, and steadily assimilated the facts they contained. Possessing as he does a retentive and well-disciplined memory always at his service, he has been justly dubbed a "walking encyclopædia" by Bernard Shaw, whose admiration for his friend's mental powers has remained undiminished during the decades that have passed since they first met at the Zetetical Society.

There is an idea prevalent among people in whose minds scientific thinking is associated with heartlessness, that Sidney and Beatrice Webb are cold, non-human, intellectual machines who have no sympathy with or understanding of the common run of humanity. No one who has come into contact with them in their numerous enterprises on behalf of the common

welfare would share this estimate of their character. In one respect they are indeed strangely unlike the normal being who takes a prominent part in public life: they never resent or reply to personal criticism, attack, or abuse. They remain serene and detached at times when less well-poised people would be liable to display temper and engage in wordy conflict with their critics. They are willing to co-operate even with those who have used them spitefully, if the common cause will gain thereby. It is said that this freedom from a usual human weakness is repellent, that it indicates a lack of feeling. But there could be no greater mistake. Neither Sidney nor Beatrice Webb wear their hearts upon their sleeves, nor do they make a public exhibition of their emotions. But the passion and feeling for suffering humanity which inspired the brains that drew up the crushing indictment of the Poor-Law system and drafted the constructive proposals for the prevention of destitution contained in the Minority Report, are infinitely deeper and greater than those which have been exhausted in countless windy platform denunciations of the capitalist system.

It is true that they have but little patience with the stupidity against which, we are told, even the gods fight in vain; but this is not a surprising nor an unforgivable trait in people whose lives are so busy that they have no time to waste in useless effort. But let anyone come to Sidney Webb with a proposition, no matter how muddled or ill thought out, and if there is the germ of an idea in it which can be worked up into something useful, he will seize upon it and show how it can be developed into a practical scheme. His mind, as has already been said, is of the positive type; he does not concentrate at first upon the difficulties of a plan, which is the habit of the negative mind: he begins with possibilities. His helpfulness in this regard and his constant readiness to be of service has won for him the respect and confidence of all sections of his party, left as well as right, in the House of Commons. This was illustrated vividly when Mr. David Kirkwood, the very antithesis of the President of the Board of Trade, sprang to the defence of his "revered leader" when he was insulted by an ill-bred Tory lordling; it has been expressed over and over again in the requests he has received for advice, which have been complied with ungrudgingly and without any expectation that the receiver would think that he was bound to follow the counsel given.

Sidney Webb is not an orator. He is a lecturer who has at his command a constant supply of illustration and ready flow of humour which lightens the most abstruse and abstract subject. He is a great public instructor who does not expect his pupils to learn very quickly nor to do very much with what they learn. He is therefore never impatient nor disappointed with the slowness with which humanity accepts new ideas nor with the mistakes it makes when it first tries to use them. He was born with, or has acquired by long practice, the habit of industry which is the easy secret of the tremendous amount of work he and his equally indefatigable wife have accomplished. He has said in jest that she has promised that when he is old and bedridden he shall have for occupation and consolation the job of making a subject catalogue for the British Museum Library. But this enterprise, it would appear, will have to be postponed indefinitely; for in spite of his years, midway between sixty and seventy, Sidney Webb looks as if he might be the first experiment of the Life Force in the direction of *Back to Methuselah*. At least he seems to have taken for his guiding principle the Shavian aphorism :

“This is the true joy in life : the being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one ; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap-heap ; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.”

It used to be often said in Socialist circles whose members considered themselves to be particularly robust in opinion because their language was peculiarly strong, that Sidney Webb had done harm to the Socialist and Labour Movement because of his moderation and his refusal to adopt a picturesque revolutionary pose. Be that as it may, the enemies of the Socialist and Labour cause recognise in him a redoubtable opponent for the reason that his methods are those of a scientist who founds his theories on a sure basis of fact and who blinks no fact even when it may appear to run counter to his theories. When the Labour Cabinet was formed, the leading metropolitan Conservative journal, in its descriptions of the new ministers, declared that Sidney and Beatrice Webb were the most dangerous Socialists in the British Empire on

account of their knowledge, their grasp of fact and detail, their lucidity of expression, and their persuasiveness in expounding Socialist doctrines. This was a compliment of which even they might deign to feel proud.

It may seem paradoxical, but it is none the less true, that in spite of their reputation as cold, matter-of-fact realists, Sidney and Beatrice Webb are in essence mystics. They have dreamed dreams and seen visions, but they have not been content with dreaming: they have planned and toiled unceasingly to realise their dreams, to give form and substance to their visions; they have devoted their lives cheerfully and whole-heartedly to the work of preparation for the future State, the Socialist Commonwealth, that may never be perfect, but will, we hope, ever reach out and grow towards perfection.

RT. HON. JOHN WHEATLEY, M.P.

LABOUR'S FIRST MINISTER OF HEALTH

By JOHN T. SCANLON

MR. JOHN WHEATLEY, Minister of Health in the first Labour Government, is probably least known of all the Labour Cabinet. Two things, I think, are responsible for this: first, the extreme reticence of the man himself, and second, the fact that at no time has he attempted to play a prominent part in the affairs of the National Labour Party. This no doubt accounts for the fact that the reader of the English newspaper woke up on the morning following the Poplar debate to find that the Labour Cabinet contained at least one man of more than ordinary ability. Eulogies on his wonderful debating powers came from the most unexpected quarters, and anxious newspaper correspondents were asking each other who and what was Mr. Wheatley.

To those of us who were associated with Mr. Wheatley in Glasgow, the triumph of that famous debate came as no surprise. Many years ago he had stamped himself on the Scottish Labour Movement and on the Glasgow Town Council as a man to be reckoned with. In one year of Parliamentary life he succeeded in convincing the whole nation that in all future political activities he is still to be reckoned with.

No one can properly appreciate the significance of Mr. Wheatley's success in Parliament without a knowledge of the tremendous difficulties which have been overcome to attain that success. Everyone acquainted with the workings of the Labour Party will agree that it is no easy matter for a man of working-class origin, without position and without wealth, to attain to the front rank of Labour politicians. A man of mediocre ability with powerful Trade-Union organisation behind him may succeed. Even this is not such an aid as twenty years ago. Twenty years ago the party was so small that almost every member was a leader. Mr. Wheatley

had neither wealth nor Trade-Union influence. In addition he joined the Independent Labour Party at a time when that party was dominated by the personalities of Hardie, Bruce Glasier, MacDonald, and Snowden. In consequence of all these difficulties the success of Mr. Wheatley stands out in bolder relief than that of many of the other leaders.

The greatest triumph of all, however, is his triumph over environment. Many of the Labour leaders have come from humble beginnings. Mr. Wheatley's beginnings were not only humble, they were sordid. Born fifty-two years ago in Waterford, he was brought to Lanarkshire when still an infant. Labour was needed to work the rich coalfield of Lanarkshire, and many of Ireland's discontented sons came to Scotland at that time, among them the father of the present Minister of Health. A home was formed in a mining village called Bargeddie.

Few people have ever heard of Bargeddie, and no one would go to live there from choice. It is a small, straggling place of a few miners' rows, seven miles east of Glasgow. All around is beautiful scenery, but the place itself is hideously ugly.

In a house in one of these rows, a single apartment, Mr. Wheatley lived with his family until he was twenty-four years of age. It is extremely doubtful if any county has given such wretched housing conditions to its workers as Lanarkshire. The actual feelings of revulsion which a sensitive mind must suffer cannot be printed, but a bare outline will show what native character is required if life there is to be raised above the level of the beasts.

Imagine a row of squat houses. From one end of the row to the other a straight wall runs down the centre. By this means the houses are divided and become what are called back-to-back houses, or sometimes "a twa-faced raw." The straight wall also effectually prevents anything in the nature of through ventilation. There was no drainage in those days and no water-supply. An open sewer was dug in front of the row, which was the receptacle of all fluid refuse. Once a week an old labourer, known as Old Mick, was sent from the mine to flush the place clean. It would appear that Old Mick's ideas on sanitation were not such as would satisfy any modern Board of Health, and the work was frequently sub-contracted to a village lad eager to earn a penny, whilst Mick drank beer at the village store.

The view from the only window opened on to an ash-pit and lavatory which served for twelve families. The living conditions in the apartment itself, which at one time housed eleven persons, beggar description. In it were two beds, but not one cupboard or press of any kind. A coal-cellar was quite unknown, and in consequence the load of coal was stowed in under one of the beds.

An interesting thing in connection with the supply of coal in this village is not widely known. At the time when Mr. Wheatley lived in Bargeddie, every miner was obliged to buy a load of coal at stated periods. The theory of the mine owners was that if the miners did not buy coal, it proved conclusively that it was being stolen from the pit-bings. Accordingly, whether one's tastes ran to large fires or small fires, the cost was the same. The coal was delivered by cartload of about 12 hundredweight and dumped outside the door. It was then shovelled into the living-room, and stowed away under the "hole-in-the-wall" bed. It was usually found that the space beneath the bed, if utilised to the full, would just accommodate the load. As a result the boards which supported the mattress rested on the coal until the load began gradually to fall.

The space under the other bed was used as a receptacle for dirty clothes, which waited there for the weekly wash. Under this bed was also kept what at that time was practically a household necessity in a Lanarkshire mining village, "the hurley bed." On this bed some of the children slept. Each evening it was brought out on its wheels and placed in the middle of the floor, and each morning wheeled in again, never aired, and never freshened in any way. It was under such conditions that the Minister of Health lived for twenty years. It is scarcely surprising that he is the extreme Socialist of the Labour Cabinet.

Almost every boy reared in a mining village automatically drifts into the mine. John Wheatley was no exception. At eleven years of age, with but little schooling, he was down the mine assisting his father. His zeal for reform must have come to him young, and it was inevitable that he should have become something of an agitator. As a young man he spoke on mining matters, and later wrote several pamphlets. One of these, "Miners, Mines, and Misery," is a horribly vivid picture of life in a coal-pit.

Anyone who has been reared in a mining village and

worked in the mines will bear me out when I say that the ambition of every thinking young miner is to get away from the pits. Almost anything is considered better, and at twenty-four John Wheatley shook the coal-dust from his feet and started work as a shop assistant. Probably had not Mr. Wheatley escaped from the thralldom of the mines, we should never have known him as a matured Minister of Health. At that time it was not easy for an unknown man to make himself a personality in the work of the Miners' Union. The Union then was a fighting factor in industrial and political life, and, as was to be expected, the men whose word counted were the already elected officials. Mr. Smillie and Mr. John Robertson had already fought elections as miners' candidates, and men like Mr. David Gilmour, Mr. Murdoch, and a few others filled the official posts. With the exception of Mr. Gilmour, who has been replaced by Mr. James Welsh, M.P., the same officials still direct the Lanarkshire Miners' Union. It is therefore safe to assume that had Mr. Wheatley been obliged to find fame through his connection with mining affairs, someone else would have been Minister of Health.

It is quite apparent, however, that the somewhat circumscribed work in a Trade Union did not appeal to him. The larger sphere of municipal, national, and later international politics appealed more to the imagination. It is not generally known, however, that his first plunge into political life was on behalf of the United Irish League. This body wielded a great amount of influence in Scottish politics, and more particularly in Lanarkshire, where the Irish vote was particularly strong. Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill had consolidated their forces, and the full weight of the U.I.L. was invariably thrown into the scale on behalf of the Liberal candidates. In consequence Mr. Wheatley's early political fights were on the side of Liberalism. This was a very brief phase, however, and a short time in the ranks of Liberalism soon convinced Mr. Wheatley that if emancipation of both the Scottish and Irish workers was ever to be achieved, it could only be through the Labour Party. He also discovered that the majority of Irish people living in Scotland would continue to live in Scotland, and Home Rule for Ireland would not bring prosperity to the lowly paid Irish labourer in the Lanarkshire steel works.

In 1908 he joined the Independent Labour Party, at that time and still the only really active propaganda body in Scotland. Then began the hardest fight that ever Mr.

Wheatley is likely to be asked to fight. This fight was nothing less than the gigantic task of winning the Irish electors from Liberalism to Labour. This, of course, was not the first attempt that had been made, but Mr. Wheatley chose a different battle-ground. He chose the inside of the church itself, and more particularly the groups that met outside the church after services. A Catholic Socialist Society was formed which soon attracted a large number of the younger Catholics to its ranks. The best testimonial to its success was the blast of bitter hostility it received from a few of the more reactionary Catholic clergy.

In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, the Society grew in influence and in strength. Every conceivable form of opposition was raised, even to threats of personal violence. Mr. Wheatley was unperturbed. Nothing illustrates the character of the man so much as his attitude during this period. When the storm of prejudice raged at its height, a mob of misguided men and women marched to his home with the deliberate intention of wrecking it and doing physical injury to its occupants.

Apparently the mob were rather staggered at the size of the house they were asked to storm. To attack and wreck the home of a heretic living in a slum would have been child's play. To attack the house of a prominent citizen was another matter. All their inherent veneration and fear of the man of property came to the top. They knew by the accumulated experiences of generations of slave-minds that the law protected property and men of property. They hesitated, wavering and undecided. No one knew the psychology of the crowd better than Mr. Wheatley. To have shown fear would have been fatal. Instead he walked down the garden path quite unconcerned; then the mob, which had come to tear him limb from limb, opened their ranks, cowed. They made a passage for him and he made his way through the crowd unmolested. That was the last attempt at physical violence.

The next attempt to stop the growth of the Catholic Socialist Society was to be made on the intellectual field. Well-known divines were recruited to deliver anti-Socialist lectures. Nothing better could have happened. Earnest-thinking Catholics who had never troubled to bother about Socialism were by this means brought into contact with its theories. Most of them belonged to the working-classes, and saw no heresy whatever in advocating a system of society

which promised a more equitable division of this world's goods. The net result of the meetings was to give the Catholic Socialist Society a magnificent advertisement.

The tit-bit of the campaign was the visit of Hilaire Belloc to Glasgow. Mr. Belloc at that time was carrying on a crusade in favour of a return to the period of the individual craftsmanship and peasant proprietorship. When it was known that he would visit Glasgow, the Catholic Socialist Society immediately challenged him to debate.

The challenge was accepted and the Pavilion Theatre was fixed on as the arena. As was expected, Mr. Wheatley was chosen to state the Socialist position. The faint-hearted were all against the debate, believing that their raw, inexperienced champion would cut a sorry figure against the clever dialectics of the brilliant Mr. Belloc. Unfortunately for Mr. Belloc, dialectics were at a discount with the practical Mr. Wheatley. The hard facts of life were the only things Mr. Wheatley would talk about, and he refused to be drawn by the airy persiflage which passes for thought. Mr. Wheatley wanted to know how, under Mr. Belloc's scheme of individual ownership of the tools of production, the individual could determine which part of Glasgow's tram-lines belonged to him or how a ship was to be portioned out so that each seaman could become an individual owner of the tools of his trade. There was no answer to Mr. Wheatley's questions, and a vote of the audience clearly indicated that Mr. Wheatley had won his first debate. That debate is still fresh in my mind, and as I sat in the gallery of the House of Commons during the big debate on Poplar, I could not help comparing John Wheatley, Minister of Health, with John Wheatley the Socialist propagandist. There seemed little or no change. Even in those early days he had the same easy air of assurance, and the same lofty disdain of those men who have not lived life, but have merely read of it. His whole "I-know" attitude was as pronounced then as it is to-day. His masterly way of building a case from the beginning to end was the same then as now. Even his little mannerisms remain unchanged. He still emphasises his argument by a characteristic striking of the open palm of the left hand with two fingers of the right. As the argument develops the hand moves proportionately quicker, until reaching its climax. The last movement is the most interesting of all. He seems to feel that his opponents are in the hollow of that left hand, and when the last argument

is shattered, the two fingers are swished along the open palm with a movement which gives the impression that both opponents and arguments are being swept to the floor and finally disposed of.

Perhaps the only thing which struck most Glasgow people during this struggle to gain the Irish votes to Labour was the cleverness of Mr. Wheatley. There was another side which appealed to me with greater force, and that was his strength of character and magnificent will-power. Attacks were made on him not only from the Catholic side, but from the Labour side. The Labour Party accused him of bringing sectarianism into the movement, and argued that there could be no such thing as Catholic Socialism any more than there could be a brand of Socialism for Methodists. Some of his opponents even went farther and suggested that he was trying to capture the Labour Party for the Catholic Church. But through it all Mr. Wheatley looked neither to the right nor left. Whilst the stronger of his opponents attacked with bitterness, Mr. Wheatley replied with argument; his weaker opponents he treated with contempt. He believed in his method and stuck to it, and the best testimony to the success of his methods is that no one is held in greater respect in Catholic circles in Glasgow, and certainly no one enjoys the confidence of the rebel Socialist movement on Clydeside more than John Wheatley.

It must not be imagined that his work during this period was confined to the Catholic Socialist Society. He was also active in almost every sphere of Labour activities, and in 1908 he was nominated as a Labour candidate for Lanarkshire County Council. He was defeated on his first attempt, but fought again in 1909 and was elected by the narrow margin of two votes. At that time Shettleston was still outside the boundaries of the City of Glasgow, but in 1910 it was annexed and he was chosen by the party to fight the seat for Labour. That undoubtedly was a stiff fight. The opposition of the Catholic Church was then at its height, but probably nothing did more to help him than this. Protestant electors who were quite indifferent about Labour politics were incensed at the unfair treatment meted out to Mr. Wheatley. They came out in their hundreds and he was returned over all other candidates. It was then that Glasgow really began to take notice of John Wheatley. Labour's organisation on Glasgow Council at that time was numerically weak. In spite of its

weakness in numbers, this group had a splendid record of municipal achievement. A magnificent service of cars was being run at a profit, whilst water and gas were municipalised. This group, known as "the stalwarts," contained some splendid fighters for municipalisation. Each of the group specialised in some form of municipal activity, and supplied the facts which the street-corner propagandists used to account. Mr. Wheatley was a valuable recruit to the ranks of the older school, and it soon became evident that his subjects would be Housing, Health, and Finance. He made a thorough investigation of the city's borrowing transactions, and was soon impressed by the appalling amount of interest paid for the use of money to run the Corporation services. He became a keen advocate of municipal banking and introduced a proposal that a Municipal Bank be established for the City of Glasgow. His greatest campaign for cheap money, however, was that in which he succeeded in converting the Glasgow Labour Party to adopt a proposal to ask the Government for money free of interest. He had gone carefully into the effect of interest on the city's finances, particularly the part it would play in any big schemes of house-building proposed by the Corporation. He produced figures to show that in the case of some property which the City owned, more money had been paid in interest than the original cost of the property.

A spirited campaign was carried on over this question, many of the orthodox economists inside and outside the party disputing what were called the economic heresies of Mr. Wheatley. He presented a statement for interest-free money in a short pamphlet called "£8 Cottages," in which he demonstrated that if money were obtained free of interest, cottages could be built at a cost of £250 and rented at £8 per annum. This, of course, was the year 1912. The scheme was submitted to Glasgow Town Council, but was rejected. He was challenged to debate the question in public by one of the Moderate Group, Councillor Miller, and the challenge was accepted. Councillor Miller challenged the whole scheme outlined by Mr. Wheatley, and as a final proof of its futility said that no Dean of Guild would pass the plans. Mr. Wheatley, however, was prepared for all objections, and on the platform produced the plans approved and signed by the Dean of Guild. Whether interest-free money is sound economics is a debatable point, but Glasgow citizens know now that the houses which Mr. Wheatley and the Labour Party wished to build

by municipal enterprise in 1912 at a cost of £250 each actually had to be built by the Corporation in 1923 at a cost of £1,200.

The striking thing concerning this period of intense political fighting is that during it all Mr. Wheatley was building up a tottering business and fighting for his life to prevent it going under. He had been invited to join what was then a small struggling publishing business with a small capital. For years it seemed as if nothing would come out of it, but his wonderful gift of organisation and his energy were thrown into it with the same zeal as he employs in his political fights. To-day it is a most successful business with a branch in almost every large town in Great Britain and Ireland. Apparently it is now founded on a rock, as I remember Mr. Wheatley placing a capable friend in charge so that he might devote himself more freely to following his bent for politics.

With the coming of the War in 1914, Labour politics in most parts of the country were obscured. In Glasgow the reverse seemed to be the case. The greater part of the movement there opposed the War and urged a peace by negotiation, and on this side Mr. Wheatley threw all his weight and influence. An intensive propaganda was carried on all over Scotland, but more particularly in Glasgow. Unemployment and the fear of unemployment were practically non-existent, and as a result a vigorous movement was created in the workshops. I was closely associated with what was known as the Clyde Workers' Committee, which achieved so much prominence during the War. The movement was intended to be a purely industrial movement, and only workshop representatives were eligible to attend. But I venture to say that few decisions were made in which John Wheatley was not consulted and in which his counsel was refused. Perhaps, however, the least said about that time the better.

During the War Mr. Wheatley was adopted by the I.L.P. to be their candidate for the Shettleston Division. A fairly sound organisation was built up, but nothing could withstand the wave of Jingoism which spread all over the country, and as Mr. Wheatley had opposed the War relentlessly, he suffered the same fate as MacDonald, Snowden, and others. Still, it is striking tribute to the man that, in spite of the fact that he fought a division where everyone knew of his anti-War activities, he was only defeated by 72 votes in a straight fight with a Tory Admiral. Those of us who were in the contest also knew that had not a certain number of disgruntled Com-

munists voted Tory, Mr. Wheatley would have been returned even then. He fought the same division in 1922, and, as is well known, he is still the member for Shettleston with a fairly safe majority. His first speech on Housing, whilst his party was in Opposition, was hailed as a great effort, and members were beginning to notice that this was no ordinary provincial town councillor.

Next, with Mr. Maxton, Mr. Kirkwood, and Mr. Stephen, he made his famous trip to the Ruhr and issued his manifesto, and the wiseacres shook their heads and said, "Ah, Mr. Wheatley has ruined his political career." Mr. Wheatley's explanation of that incident was quite a sound one. He felt that our Pacifists in their attitude to the French occupation of the Ruhr were as openly anti-French as the Jingoës had been anti-German. His belief was that the French working-class were liable to be driven into the arms of the French reactionaries. He himself would have been the last to claim that he offered a solution of the European problems, and his action then was more of a gesture to the French working-class movement than an attempt to bring peace to Europe.

The next time he came into more than usual prominence in the House was on the night of the Scottish Estimates. On that occasion he and three Scottish colleagues were suspended for deliberately flouting the authority of the chair. Mr. Maxton had called Sir Frederick Banbury a murderer, and in spite of requests from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, his own leader, he refused to withdraw. Whilst the commotion was at its height it appeared that Mr. Maxton was wavering, when Mr. Wheatley jumped to his feet, repeated the charge, and told Mr. MacDonald quite plainly that he need not ask him to withdraw. Both Mr. Maxton and Mr. Wheatley were promptly suspended, and the Press let itself loose on the wild men from the Clyde. In point of fact, the men from the Clyde were not so wild. The protest was made deliberately against the fact that that year, as always, the House had treated the Scottish Estimates as of no importance. The four M.P.s went off to Scotland, where they were received as national heroes and martyrs. Huge demonstrations were held in every town in Scotland, and the question of Home Rule for Scotland became for about the first time a live issue in Scottish politics. I can remember the attitude of the older men in the Labour Party during this episode. All of them were quite convinced that these scenes in the House and the

revolutionary talk in the country would kill the party, and I can remember one of them who is now in the Cabinet telling me that it would cost the party fifty seats. Curiously enough, Mr. Wheatley's firm belief was that the party would gain seats as a result. His argument was that for the first time in British politics the working-classes could really feel that here was a party that was not prepared to sit quietly in their places and allow the bad old conditions to prevail without some protest. The General Election came in less than six months, and it was then found that, in spite of the scenes, or perhaps because of them, Labour had actually won over fifty seats. Perhaps it is more than a coincidence that the Conservative member, Captain Elliot, who was in charge of the Scottish Estimates, was defeated in what had hitherto been considered a safe Conservative seat. Be that as it may, Mr. Wheatley's actions in the House had stamped him as a man who could not be ignored in politics, and because of that, as I said at the outset, those of us who knew him best were not surprised when he was chosen as a member of the first Labour Cabinet.

In conclusion, I cannot help feeling that to the outsider I may not seem the proper person to write a biographical sketch of Mr. Wheatley. I have been lavish with my praise and sparing of my criticism. Quite frankly, I am a great admirer of Mr. Wheatley. I think he is a big man with a big brain, the like of which the working-class movement produces but rarely. But not only has he a big brain, he has also a big heart. Success in business and in politics has made no difference to Mr. Wheatley. He is still absolutely indifferent about dress, and on the morning when the men from the mines and factories went to Buckingham Palace to receive their seals of office, the suit that Mr. Wheatley wore was ten years old. It should be explained that this was not done because of any excess of democratic zeal, or because he was not duly impressed with the importance of the occasion. As he himself said, if he had had a better suit with him he would have worn it, but on that week, as on all other weeks, he came from Glasgow with only the suit he wore, and it was purely an accident that the one he put on at that week-end happened to be a very old one. These things, of course, are relatively unimportant in proving the man, but if one were at liberty to write of his many acts of generosity to less fortunate brethren, most people would wonder why they had ever

thought of John Wheatley as a hard man and one who had no room for sentiment. I, for one, have a profound belief in the man, in his ability and sincerity; and whilst in these days of rapid political change it is dangerous to prophesy, I am prepared to take the risk and say that the militant section of the Movement to which Mr. Wheatley belongs will never require to apologise for their spokesmen in the first Labour net.

RT. HON. STEPHEN WALSH, M.P.

LABOUR'S FIRST WAR MINISTER

“**R**OMANTIC” is an adjective that occurs time after time in describing the rise to power of Labour and its leaders. It would be hard, however, to discover a case where its employment is more justifiable or less avoidable than in that of the Rt. Hon. Stephen Walsh, M.P., D.L., J.P., who was Secretary of State for War in the first Labour Government.

From an Industrial School to the Front Ministerial Bench is a long, long way indeed. It took Stephen Walsh—“Our Stee” as he is affectionately known from one end of Lancashire to the other—over half a century to complete the journey. But the story of these fifty years is, in his case, an unbroken record of continuous effort on behalf of his fellow-workers—a struggle marked with many victories and hardly a defeat.

Like many others who have left their footprints on the sands of time, he came of Irish stock. Nevertheless, he was born in 1859 in Liverpool, where the first years of his life were also spent. Of his early days his knowledge is but scanty. Death robbed him of his parents at so tender an age that of them he cannot retain the slightest recollection. His first vivid memory is of the occasion when, straying aimlessly about the streets of Liverpool, he was picked up by a kindly policeman and carried off to a place of shelter on the officer's shoulders.

Ultimately the Kirkdale Industrial School became the home of his childhood, and he remained there until attaining the age of 14 years, acquiring in the meantime a good elementary education.

He then strode out into the world, and his steps led to Ashton-in-Makerfield, in the Wigan coal-field, where for eighteen years he earned his livelihood as a miner. The conditions of employment at that time were not particularly attractive, and his commencing wage was only one of ten-

pence for a ten-hour working day. It was a marked characteristic of that period that education was a blessing shared by few of the adult miners, and inasmuch as many of them were practically illiterate, they were not slow to appreciate the advantages which Stephen Walsh possessed. His sterling character and keen intelligence, too, commanded their respect and confidence, and he was invariably selected to uphold their interests whenever any differences arose. He organised the Ashton Branch of the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation, and ultimately, after working in various capacities underground, was appointed to the position of check-weighman.

Thence onward, his status and influence amongst his fellow-workers advanced as his conscientious and zealous service brought him promotion from one high office to another. From Miners' Agent for the Wigan district—a post to which he was appointed in 1901—he became Vice-President of the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation, Vice-President of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, and thence the Vice-President of the English Miners' Conciliation Board, a position which he held with marked ability from 1914 to 1920.

In his own county of Lancashire he has rendered equally valuable service. For over 40 years he has been an enthusiastic member of the Co-operative Movement and the Order of Oddfellows. The Ashton-in-Makerfield Urban District Council engaged his attention for a period of eight years, and he also filled the Presidential chair of the Wigan Trades Council. The prominent part he played in local life resulted in his appointment as a Deputy-Lieutenant for the County of Lancashire, and J.P. for the borough of Wigan and the county.

In the sphere of national politics his efforts have been attended by the same outstanding success. He had long been an active leader of Labour thought in the Ince Division when the Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation decided to contest it in 1906, and it was almost natural that he should be chosen as their candidate. The result of the election demonstrated the wisdom of their choice, for he polled a majority of 4,636 over the previous Conservative member, an influential colliery proprietor in the locality. Since then he has held the seat tenaciously and continuously, with a majority of four figures or more at each election.

In the House of Commons he made his mark without delay, and provided an admirable demonstration of the fact that the

measure of a man's capacity for statesmanship is in no wise commensurate with his physical stature. Were this so, indeed, his five feet of height would long ago have debarred him from the Cabinet rank which he attained when Labour entered office. But he has qualities that more than compensate for whatever disadvantages attend his diminutive build. A genuineness and sincerity mark all his utterances. His wide classical reading make his speeches a pleasure to hear, whilst his fluency and lucidity leave nothing unexplained or misunderstood. On all the chords of emotion he can touch as the occasion requires, and though he sometimes hits hard and heavily, his remarks never bear the sting of malice. The fact that he does not speak unnecessarily ensures for him the ready ear of the House whenever he does consider it desirable to rise.

His colleagues of the Parliamentary Labour Party have elected him as their senior vice-chairman, and he is one of the few Labour leaders who held ministerial office before the advent of the MacDonald Government. He was Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of National Service in 1917, and to the Local Government Board from 1917 to 1919. Though an active opponent before the War of any suggestion that savoured of compulsory military service, he had sufficiently the courage of his convictions to rise and advocate this course in the House of Commons when he honestly considered that the plight of the nation necessitated it. At the same time, he manifested his consistency by supporting the cause of the men who fought on every occasion.

It is agreed on every side that the first Labour Premier could have made no more appropriate an appointment to the position of Secretary for War than that of Mr. Walsh. That was the feeling when the Government entered into office, and it was unaltered—unless indeed it were intensified—when the time came nine months later for handing over the Seals of Office. During his term of office he strove hard to understand the intricacies of the Department under his control, and the measure of success which attended his administration was as surprising to his political opponents as it was satisfactory to his supporters.

Yet, serious-minded though he is when the duties of his position are engaging his attention, he can unbend, and in the cheery atmosphere of the smoke-room of the House of Commons or the Miners' Club, there is no more genial companion and no better raconteur than "Little Stee."

RT. HON. VERNON HARTSHORN

LABOUR'S POSTMASTER-GENERAL

TRADE Unionism is, among other things, a business movement in a very sound sense of the phrase, and the great majority of Trade-Union leaders who have won eminence as such owe much of their success to the possession of sound business qualities.

Mr. Vernon Hartshorn is a perfect specimen of the business Trade Unionist. When, on the accession to office of the first Labour Government, he was appointed Postmaster-General, even the ranks of Tuscany evinced some disposition to cheer. Even the fact that he did not prove to be so spectacularly successful in office as both friend and foe, with well-nigh equal complacency, expected him to be brought upon him astonishingly little criticism at a time when political critics were apt to make the most of opportunities.

Vernon Hartshorn was born fifty-one years ago at the little hill village of Pontywaun, near Pontypridd, in the heart of the mining region of South Wales. Pontywaun is a small name in the gazetteer, but it holds a high place in the history of Labour. Five Labour M.P.s and three presidents of the South Wales Miners' Federation first drew breath in this inconspicuous and not remarkably picturesque hamlet.

The first Labour Postmaster-General thus began his career with every encouragement that local tradition could afford. His taste for commercial affairs as well as his business ability was in early life marked, and when he found employment in a colliery office at Cardiff docks, he seemed definitely to have selected a career. Socialism, however, was with him a guiding principle, and he left his office chair for underground work in the mines, in the firm belief that here lay the wider field of service. The complete confidence which his fellows rapidly came to repose in him led to his appointment as check-weigher at Risca, and subsequently, as his important gifts as a strategist

won wider recognition, as an organiser of the Maesteg district of the South Wales Miners' Federation.

This was in 1905, a period of extraordinary generative activity in the sphere of politics. In South Wales, particularly, a mighty questioning of the old order and a tremendous urge towards new things were producing portents not easily, one would have thought, to be misread. Liberalism, given an undoubted impetus through the hustling activities of Mr. Lloyd George, was startled in the midst of a rosy career of conquest by the stir of a new creation: all about them the political firmament was shaken by changes the significance of which to the shrewder of their prophets was only too clear.

Before they had recovered from their bewilderment the battle was joined. The I.L.P.—a party with a keen eye for psychological opportunities—appeared in the field in a state of high enthusiasm and perfect equipment. It is doubtful whether, despite the phenomenon of occlusion produced temporarily by Mr. Lloyd George, their position ever looked hopeless even for a moment: most of the time, indeed, their ultimate success seemed assured.

Vernon Hartshorn was in his element. He had never underestimated the strength of Liberal-Labourism as a fastness for the political affections of the older generation of South Wales miners: equally he detected with perfect accuracy its fundamental weakness as a structure of which only the unessential ornaments had ever been renewed.

Liberal-Labourism did not like the plain threat of supersession directed against it, and was particularly annoyed with Mr. Hartshorn, who had earned some reputation as a local preacher, and ought, it was thought, to have been satisfied with the mild savours of Nonconformist sanctity. "Hartshorn the wild man," "Hartshorn the firebrand"—the useful epithet "Bolshie" was not then in being—was the theme of many a speech and sermon in which the new protagonist of the workers was held up to execration. An attempt was even made to strike at the daring innovator through his family by organising a mean campaign of ostracism: it failed partly because it offended the better nature of the community, as a whole, and partly because it failed to agitate either Mr. Hartshorn or any member of his domestic circle.

Events rapidly shaped into historical proportions. Trade Unionism had fairly entered the field of politics, and Trade-Union leaders were offered unprecedented opportunities for

the exposition and justification of their faith. Hartshorn was inevitably a chosen member of the vanguard. In the two general elections of 1910 he fought Mid-Glamorgan as a Labour candidate, and although defeated by a certain intransigence on the part of a large section of the miners who, while firm believers in his policy and methods as a Trade Unionist, thought it was not in their interests to transplant so able a leader to Westminster, he confirmed all those impressions in his favour which were already strong in the minds of his fellows.

In 1911 he was elected by South Wales to the Executive of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain. This was more than a personal triumph. It was a notable sign of the times, when in the coal-fields events were fast moving to a crisis. Hartshorn was a noted member of a free-lance band known in South Wales as the "Fighting Fifth," the other four being the late James Winstone, George Barker, Noah Ablett, and Charles Stanton. These five men, by the intensity of the convictions they held in common, and by superior intellectual mobility, had achieved the virtual leadership of affairs long before any of them attained important official rank. The choice of one of this group to represent South Wales in the National Council on the Industry meant that South Wales had finally repudiated the "interim" Trade Unionism of the nineties, with its somewhat Turveydropsical air of deportment and its over-anxiety to clear itself of unimaginable imputations of anarchic naughtinesses.

The Executive of M.F.G.B. in 1911 was as regenerate a body as even Vernon Hartshorn could wish. It was full of fight—there was even something a little precious in its pugnacity—it had an excellent cause, and it was sure of the devotion of the masses behind it. In 1912 the first of what was to be a series of national strikes was declared throughout the coal-fields of the country. The Liberal Government threatened battle, murder, and sudden death, and performed some foolish manœuvres with the armed forces of the Crown. It was one of the manifestations of Asquithian Liberalism—then in a Byzantine phase of glory prognosticating decay—which did a great deal to disillusion the working-classes of the country. The miners laughed at the bayonets brandished in their faces, and showed a disconcerting readiness to understand the point of view of the individual soldier and sailor engaged in the uncongenial task of blacklegging which the soldiers and sailors were not backward in appreciating. These

signs of fraternisation scared the Government, and brought the mine-owners, with knocking knees, to a realisation of the size of the problem facing them. The result was a substantial victory the terms of which appeared in red letters in the pages of industrial history as the Minimum Wages Act.

What some anxious observers had taken to be the end of all things in the mining industry was really intended as a beginning. Hartshorn, whose position on the Executive had been consolidated by his share in the conduct of the strike, bore a leading part in the discussions excited by the publication by the "rebels" of a remarkable pamphlet, *The Miners' Next Step*, issued exegetically after the strike. A feverish activity on the part of the mine-owners marked their appreciation of the formidable character of the new force with which they had to reckon. Titanic struggles were apprehended: it seemed as if the miners might bring about changes in the whole social struggle.

War intervened. The miners found their position threatened by a form of attack, supported by insidious "patriotic" propaganda, which they could hardly have foreseen. Provocations of an impudent kind culminated in an attempt to abrogate the right to strike. South Wales accepted this challenge: Mr. Lloyd George, hurrying down in person to eat his words, and with them a competent portion of humble pie, barely staved off an industrial revolt which must have brought his cabalistic administration toppling down.

Matters were temporarily composed, but the ferment went on. A new spirit of insurgence, aggravated by the spectacle of gross profiteering, manifested itself, and, out-running the tactics of the official leaders, kept affairs in a state of constant turmoil. Hartshorn, for one, had deliberately sacrificed much of his ascendancy through his steady adherence to a national line of conduct. It was not difficult to foment distrust of a man who had been made an O.B.E., and during the latter part of the War and the first year or so subsequently Vernon Hartshorn saw the rebellion against his leadership become formidable. It was not checked by his unopposed return to Parliament in 1918, for Ogmores: incidentally no one has since been found willing to oppose him.

The fighting fifth was by this time a mere heroic legend. James Winstone had become president of the South Wales Miners' Federation, and had enough to do to fight the factions of the left. Stanton had gone jingo: it was a bad case, as

his subsequent appearance in the horrific guise of a National Democrat proved.

Noah Ablett, one of the ablest and keenest of the five, was in open revolt. The strike of 1920 sharply illustrated these dissensions, which reached such a height that after the struggle Hartshorn, resolute not to surrender principles strongly held, resigned both from the National Executive and from the South Wales Federation.

South Wales was shocked. An open letter from Frank Hodges, urging them to apply to Hartshorn to reconsider his decision, did much to encourage a mood of deep penitence, and when, shortly after, James Winstone died, South Wales made generous amends to the injured leader by electing him to the Presidency of their Federation and thus restoring him to the National Executive.

It was a wise and opportune restoration. In 1921 the miners entered upon a struggle which was to have incalculable reactions not only upon their own organisation, but upon the whole body of Trade Unionism. Hartshorn was badly needed. As the *Fortnightly Review* said, in reviewing the strike, "Mr. Vernon Hartshorn knows every phase of the coal industry : he is master of all its intricate statistics, and completely master of himself when he is addressing the House. . . . He has always been ready for a fair deal and is the miners' true leader."

The events of the strike cannot here be described or discussed in detail. Nobody of this generation is likely to forget the colossal blunders committed by the Government of the day in its handling of a situation fraught with perils which the nation apprehended too keenly for its sense of fairness ; the resounding discords that drowned the counsels of the miners themselves with confusion ; the dramatic collapse of the Triple Alliance of Miners, Railwaymen, and Transport Workers under a stress too great for a movement still in the earliest constructional stages. It is often forgotten that despite these clashing crises much real and lasting work was done to establish the historical and economic truths of the position in the coal-fields of Britain. Hartshorn, with his consummate mastery of intricate statistics and his cool business faculties, did outstanding service in this direction.

He was by this time, in common with advanced thought in Labour circles, turning more and more towards the political side of the Movement. In 1923 he became chairman of the Welsh group of Labourites in the House of Commons. He

had ventured to prophesy in October 1921 that Labour, if not in power in twelve months from that date, would be at least a dominating force in Parliament. As political prophecies go, this vaticination was uncannily accurate. By October 1923 the trend of events was sufficiently obvious to every real student of political affairs.

Two months later Labour arrived as the dominating force, Hartshorn was too obvious a choice to be overlooked by a Labour Cabinet maker. He was remembered, too, as a business man, and in the post of Postmaster-General it was thought, with reason, that his business abilities would find every scope.

It is interesting to note the account given by this notable man, so often screamed at as an "extremist" and a "fire-brand," of the influences which have chiefly swayed his mental and moral development. They are, he says, as follows: his wife; Primitive Methodism; and the writings of Robert Blatchford. Well may the Russian school despair of their efforts among British Trade-Union leaders!

RT. HON. NOEL BUXTON, M.P.
LABOUR'S FIRST MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE

BY ONLOOKER

SOME people are roused at the call of country, others at the call of liberty. For nearly everyone there exists some touchstone which quickens the imagination. But duty above all finds an immediate response in Mr. Noel Buxton. It is the hidden spring of all his actions. Once he decides that along a certain direction lies the path of duty, no consideration will deter him from pursuing it. A deep sense of responsibility has shaped his life of service to the community. In him it grows and does not weaken with success, because its roots proceed (one suspects) from a firm religious belief. For Mr. Buxton belongs to a family devoted to evangelicalism. Their traditions of service illuminate the pages of the history of early nineteenth-century England. The ancestor of whom he is rightly proud is the Buxton who led the agitation for abolishing slavery. The Church Missionary Society owes a great deal to the unflagging energies of his father, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton. His mother, Lady Victoria Noel, a daughter of the Earl of Gainsborough, had qualities of selfless devotion which gained her the affection of Queen Victoria.

To be born rich may fall to the lot of many. But few are lucky enough to be brought up not only endowed with every material advantage, but in a home atmosphere of religious ideals. Such was Mr. Buxton's happy lot. Little wonder that the influence of his home stood firm against the dominating materialism of a first-class "liberal" education at Harrow, and Trinity College, Cambridge. It stood him in good stead when in later life he became a Member of Parliament. He would not associate himself with the dangerous Imperialistic school of which Mr. Asquith and Viscount Grey were the most active members. By that act of refusal he seemed

at the time to strike a fatal blow at his own career. For with the death of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the Liberal imperialists obtained complete control of affairs, and disposed of the offices of government. As early as 1910 Mr. Noel Buxton foresaw the dangers with which Grey's foreign policy threatened the country. Almost alone in the House, he never tired of warning the Liberal Government that war would inevitably come if they persisted in a negative policy of balance of power and encirclement. Very courageously he argued that if nations wished to live harmoniously together they must be ready to "give and take," and indicated how this could be done in actual fact. His appeals were received coldly by the Treasury Bench, and lost on the outside world amid the tumult and the shouting of the Northcliffe press.

During and before this period—from 1902 onwards—he turned his attentions to the suffering peoples of the Near East. His interest in the Balkan peoples began in a pleasure trip to the Peninsula, little visited in those days by Western Europeans. Before the luxurious days of the Simplon-Orient Express, travellers to these remote regions were few and far between. A man with the family traditions of a Buxton would naturally be fired by the spectacle of down-trodden nations struggling to rid themselves of the Imperialist yoke of Turkey. And so Noel Buxton and his brother Charles, together with Bouchier, the famous Near East correspondent of *The Times*, became the standard-bearers in the West of the Balkan peoples. The Balkan Committee which Mr. Buxton created for the purpose of focussing English opinion on Near Eastern questions had several distinguished chairmen at its head, including for many years the late Lord Bryce. Its activities and repute were such that at one time the Government of the day could scarcely ignore its recommendations. Even at the present time the mere mention of the *comité balkanique* in Serbia or Bulgaria will meet with an immediate response.

The Balkan Committee owed much of its success to a factor which illustrates another facet of Mr. Buxton's character. Propagandist associations often lamentably fail, not because their aim cannot commend itself to the public, but owing to the unreasoning vehemence of its advocates. The method of presentation is a vital factor. I was once told by an editor that you can say almost what you like in a newspaper; it depended on your way of presenting the idea. Mr. Buxton

knows this secret both in speech and in writing. He is an idealist, but he seems to be a realist. Aims which would inspire in Mr Lloyd George a peroration about the dawn on the Welsh hills are advanced by Mr. Buxton in the garb of expediency. It may be true, as M. Georges Duhamel once stated to me, that only the idealists are the practical people to-day. But unfortunately few of them have acquired Mr. Buxton's habit of talking in terms of practical politics.

A man who is impelled by a sense of duty has seldom the makings of an iconoclast. Passions or enthusiasms are not likely to take hold of him, and make him ignore conventions and laws in the pursuit of his purpose. Mr. Buxton is no exception to the rule. He is a great believer in order and regulation. He has a profound respect for the law. Even before he joined the Labour Party in 1919, his outlook was always that of a Fabian. The philosophy of a Sidney Webb delights him: but he would feel less at home with an individualist like Keir Hardie. He believes supremely in moral progress through State action.

This attitude of mind perhaps explains why when the War came he supported its efficient prosecution. He had neglected nothing on his part to avert it, but when it came he saw in it a great opportunity for the liberation of the small nationalities of Europe. When the Asquith Cabinet in September 1914 were considering the possibilities of striking a blow at Germany on the Balkan front, they sent for Mr. Noel Buxton. They proposed to entrust him with a mission to the Balkans to secure Bulgaria's entry on the side of the Allies, or failing this, her neutrality. But differences of opinion held by Mr. Asquith and Lord Grey on the one side, and Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Churchill on the other, made failure inevitable. Accompanied by his brother Charles, Mr. Noel Buxton left for Sofia in a warship, but with nothing definite to offer the Bulgarians. Had Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Churchill had their way, a different page of history might have been written and the War might possibly have ended two years earlier. The attempted assassination by a Turk of the brothers Buxton at Bukarest was one of the incidents of the journey, and Mr. Buxton has worn a beard ever since—which becomes him well—to hide the wound in the jaw.

As the weary years of the War went on, Mr. Buxton gravitated more and more towards those who stood for peace by negotiation. But he never identified himself with the thirty-three

Pacifist members. He voted for conscription, and worked in the Admiralty. He believed the War should go on if an honourable peace could not be concluded, but that "the prosecution of the War should be conducted in the diplomatic field as well." That was a way of saying that the rulers of Europe should find out at intervals on what terms the combatants were prepared to make peace. Thus he presented his idealism in the dress of common sense—the only way of making your voice heard in those savage and blind days. His public meeting at the Central Hall, Westminster, in 1917, on his return from Washington, when he announced the terms of the German peace offer of 1916, was described by the *Nation* as the turning-point in the development of moderate and sane opinion. From that time on, the peace movement gathered new force and assumed a more practical shape. The atmosphere was prepared for the famous Lansdowne letter.

He lost his seat in the Khaki Election of 1918, but only by 200, while his friends lost by many thousands. He joined them in the wilderness and became a member of the Labour Party. It is characteristic of the man that the Labour Party is not only his spiritual home, but also his natural home. He may not look the part. The intriguing distinction of his appearance has made people compare him to a Cardinal, to an Elizabethan courtier, or to a figure out of Van Dyck portraits. But his tastes are simple, and in spite of his wealth his living plain. He did not break with "society" when he apparently burnt his political boats, because he had always avoided the circles of fashion. Indeed nothing gives him greater pleasure than to spend a week-end in a workman's cottage in the pretty little village of Upshire which looks down on the stately manorial home of his childhood. Even as a Cabinet Minister he regarded a week-end so spent as one of the cherished luxuries of life. On a Saturday in long waders, knee deep in a pond which adorns his garden, he can often be seen thinning out the rushes. Digging and hoeing or planting young trees are a passion with him.

His appointment as Minister of Agriculture in the first Labour Cabinet was a surprise to the world at large. He was known generally as an expert in foreign affairs; in this field he enjoyed international repute. But his intimate acquaintances knew that he was as readily familiar with the needs of the countryside as he was at home in the intriguing atmosphere of European Chancellories. If agriculture is

less exciting, its interests, its hundred-and-one branches, are diverse and exacting in mastery of technical detail. Mr. Buxton's wide knowledge and ready judgment in agricultural matters very soon impressed the House. His desire to work for the oppressed and for the under-dog found satisfaction in his determined efforts to raise the standard of life for the agricultural worker. His speech on the second reading of the Wages Board Bill vividly depicted the intolerable conditions of the cultivators of the soil. Although he is not a great rhetorician, he is a skilful speaker, but too gentle and cultivated to have ready recourse to what I always consider the rather questionable arts of oratory.

His manner of speech illustrates his equable temper. His was one of the coolest heads on the Treasury Bench, and he can be relied on in a crisis not to lose it. At the Ministry he worked hard, and obviously enjoyed administration. He went out of his way to invite suggestions and new ideas. He investigated on the spot far more than Ministers usually care to do. He wished to acquaint himself at first hand with every phase of agricultural policy, so that it is not surprising that he was extremely difficult to trip up in the House.

He is very affectionate in his home life. He loves children and young people. He is never happier than when he is surrounded by young spirits brimming over with life and new ideas.

Character strengthened by a Puritanical strain, a mind enriched by wide reading and an artistic sense, are the elements of which our public life stands most in need, and they are qualities very prominently marked in Mr. Noel Buxton. During the last few years our politics have been degraded by demagoguery, by cheap journalism, and by the exploitation of our lowest instincts. The advent of Labour to power has brought a new spirit into public life, and Noel Buxton may find cause for congratulation that it was not until this period of clean politics that he received the opportunity for service to which his knowledge and capacity entitled him in the past.

RT. HON. LORD OLIVIER, B.A., LL.D.,
K.C.M.G., C.B.

LABOUR'S FIRST SECRETARY FOR INDIA

By W. STEPHEN SANDERS

IN their young days, movements of a political character, popular or otherwise, have their foibles, and the British Socialist Movement was no exception to the rule. With the Social Democratic Federation they were a red tie and the use of the term "comrade"; with the more intellectual and middle-class Fabians they were the wearing of velvet jackets and Liberty gowns, an affectation taken over from the æsthetic circle of the early eighties which, in a feeble, ineffective way, was itself an expression of revolt against the commercial philistinism of the age, but which, however, was waning rapidly when the more robust and fundamental Socialist rebellion against the same spirit began to make itself felt and heard.

Visitors to Fabian lectures at this period, 1885 to 1890, could not have failed to notice among those present a tall, grave, handsome, and distinguished-looking man, whose velvet sartorial defiance of the bourgeoisie suited him admirably and gave him the appearance of a dignified Spanish hidalgo. This was Sydney Olivier, then a colleague of Sidney Webb in the Colonial Office, Secretary of the Society from 1886 to 1890, one of the seven Fabian essayists, later Sir Sydney Olivier, B.A., LL.D., K.C.M.G., C.B., C.M.G., Governor of Jamaica, and, in 1924, Baron Olivier of Ramsden, the first Labour Secretary of State for India.

The meetings of the Fabian Society were then held at Willis's Rooms, King Street, St. James's, "an ultra-respectable rendezvous for societies of the most select character, keeping up an old-fashioned ceremonial of crimson tablecloths, elaborate silver candlesticks, and impressively liveried footmen." These aristocratic surroundings, in which Sydney

Olivier's personality fitted perfectly, were granted to the society after it had been turned out of dingy quarters in Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street. In Willis's Rooms the Fabian Essays were delivered as lectures. If the proprietors of the premises could have foreseen that out of these addresses and the discussions which followed them a creative revival of Socialist thought would arise, culminating in the birth of a new democratic governing party in the State, they doubtless would have decided that a body too revolutionary for a city inn was not a suitable tenant for a West End institution. Be that as it may, the Fabians had an enjoyable time in St. James's. Their meetings were full of interest. The leaders of the society were gifted men and women, full of the intellectual audacity of youth, attractive speakers, and able debaters. Before the calibre of the society became noised abroad it was possible occasionally to lure well-known individualists to the Fabian forum in order to oppose or criticise Socialist doctrines. The result was that the unsuspecting guests were, dialectically speaking, "butchered to make a Fabian holiday." One of the victims of this process was Mr. R. B. Haldane, M.P., now Lord Haldane, first Labour Lord Chancellor, who in 1888 addressed the society on "Radical Remedies for Economic Evils," and whose discomfiture in the discussion which followed is vividly described by the pen of a non-Socialist in the contemporary issue of the long-defunct journal the *Radical*.

Sydney Olivier, although not then developed into the fluent speaker he has since become, took an active part in these combats of wit and intellect. He has a clear and penetrating mind, and, in spite of his customary gravity, a delightful sense of humour which appeals irresistibly to an educated audience. His approach to Socialism was by way of religion and philosophy. He had, according to Bernard Shaw, "wrestled with the huge philosophy of Comte, who thus comes in as a Fabian influence." Before joining the Fabian Society he was a member of a group of persons who established in 1883 a monthly periodical entitled the *Christian Socialist*, and who claimed to be inspired by the Christian Socialist movement of 1848-52. According to E. R. Pease, the historian of the Fabian Society, this group included individuals who were not Socialist and others who were not Christian. Whether Sydney Olivier was both is a matter of conjecture; he was certainly a Socialist. The leading member of the

group was the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, who was, and remains, an ardent advocate of the Single Tax, and still continues a long career of public service as a member of the London County Council. Other persons who were connected with the group were the Rev. C. L. Marson and the Rev. W. E. Moll. The latter afterwards took a prominent share in the work of the Independent Labour Party.

Sydney Olivier graduated at Corpus Christi, Oxford, and then entered the Colonial Office in 1882, after heading the open competition for the Civil Service. He joined the Fabian Society in 1885 at the same time as Sidney Webb, and at once became one of its most important figures. For a number of years he with Sidney Webb, Bernard Shaw, and Graham Wallas formed a close working intellectual partnership which shaped the policy and ultimately the traditions of the society. They were a remarkable combination, their various qualities providing the essentials of effective leadership, and they acted with a loyalty to each other rarely equalled in the history of such coteries. Sydney Olivier's contribution to the alliance was a wide culture, a literary taste of a high order, and an artistic sensibility together with a strong belief in efficiency. He had no sympathy with the view, at that time rather prevalent in Socialist circles, that slipshod methods in the practical affairs of life were an appropriate and useful method of expressing contempt for the soulless routine of the capitalist system. His contention was that the more efficient a Socialist was in the work at which he obtained his living, the more valuable he would be for the cause of Socialism. The truth of this precept has certainly been exemplified in his own career.

While Sydney Olivier was Secretary of the Fabian Society, from 1886 to 1890, he was rapidly "acquiring merit" in his post at the Colonial Office, where it is said that the records of the society—not very voluminous at this stage—were stored in the drawer of a desk. It is worth noting that his connection with Socialist propaganda does not appear to have hindered his advancement in his profession as civil servant. This may have been due to the fact that the Fabian Society, in spite of the brilliance of its chief spirits, was for a number of years after its inception a comparatively obscure body; and further that Socialism, to the powers that be, was a more or less academic subject. But it may be that Sydney Olivier's efficiency more than outweighed the unconventionality of his

social and political opinions in the minds of those who swayed the destinies of servants of the Colonial Office. It is doubtful, however, whether in later times, when Socialism became a widespread movement in England, such freedom of expression of unpopular political and social views which he always claimed and fearlessly exercised would have been considered compatible with high and responsible positions in the administrative machinery of the State.

One of the early Fabian Tracts, No. 7, *Capital and Land*, was written by Sydney Olivier in 1888, and has remained one of the permanent publications of the Society, it having been revised and reprinted from time to time. It is a closely argued attack on the theory that the Single Tax would be a panacea for social and economic evils. The author shows that it is practically impossible to disentangle capital from land as it is to find land which does not partake of the nature of capital—in fact, the two are indistinguishable. Rent and interest are “the tribute of Industry to Idleness that Land Nationalisers denounce in its form of rent, and that Socialists, and all who have the Socialist spirit, denounce in all its forms.” He estimates that this tribute amounts to at least one-half of the wealth produced by the workers from top to bottom of society, and is paid to a parasitic class before the workers can provide for themselves and their proper dependents. The Socialist desires gradually to extinguish the payment of this tribute because “until the workers of this and every other country collectively own and control the instruments they must work with, till then are liberty and manhood impossible for the majority; and that until we cease to pay to non-effectives the half of our annual sustenance, it will be impossible for the many to obtain that existence and education in youth, that security and leisure in old age, and those opportunities for human and appreciative life which the resources of our country and our civilisation are amply sufficient to yield them.”

The Fabian essay for which Sydney Olivier is responsible is characteristically devoted to a consideration of the Moral Aspect of the Basis of Socialism. His argument is described by himself in the opening sentence of the essay “as an attempt to justify Socialist ideals by the appeal to canons of moral judgment accepted generally and supported by the results of positive ethical science.” Naturally the limitations of space prevented him from covering the whole of a very big sub-

ject; but read in conjunction with the other essays, it is a telling and adequate justification for the Socialist faith and is well worth reading to-day, thirty-six years since it was first written. The final passage may be quoted in order to show the manner and temper in which he approached the problems with which he and his companions were concerned :

“The form, perhaps, does not outrun the spirit, any more than the spirit anticipates the form ; and it may have been sufficient to have shown some grounds for the conviction that Socialist morality, like that of all preceding systems, is only the morality which the conditions of human existence have made necessary ; and that it is only the expression of the eternal passion of life seeking its satisfaction through the striving of each individual for the freest and fullest activity ; that Socialism is but a stage in the unending progression out of the weakness and the ignorance in which society and the individual alike are born, toward the strength and enlightenment in which they can see and choose their own way forward—from the chaos where morality is not, to the consciousness which sees that morality is reason ; and to have made some attempt to justify the claim that the cardinal virtue of Socialism is nothing else than Common Sense.”

Following the publication of Fabian Essays, which were an unexpected success and laid the foundations of the reputation of the Fabian Society, the activities of the society increased rapidly. The provinces were invaded, especially in the North, and the doctrines of Socialism were carried into quarters which had hitherto been inaccessible. In this provincial propaganda Sydney Olivier, owing to the ties of his profession, was unable to take part. But he lectured in London to workmen's organisations, including branches of the Social Democratic Federation, where Fabian speakers, in spite of the scorn and disdain which H. M. Hyndman exhibited towards Fabianism, were always welcome. He thus secured a close contact with working-class mentality, sentiment, and conditions which kept him in touch with reality. Sydney Olivier, Bernard Shaw, Sidney Webb, and Graham Wallas were then ever ready to act as the intellectual swordsman of the new economics—they were the Three Musketeers and D'Artagnan of the new ideas in politics and social theory. Through their inspiration the Fabian Society had in a comparatively few years given a new trend to political and social thought and

began to excite fear in the minds of the leaders of Liberalism, who became aware of a new leaven working among the rank and file of their local associations. This alarm was expressed in the official organ of the Liberal party, the *Speaker*, which defined Fabianism as a "mixture of dreary, gassy doctrinairism and crack-brained farcicality, set off with a portentous omniscience and flighty egotism not to be matched outside the walls of a lunatic asylum." It is a sufficient comment on this judgment of the old generation concerning the younger, which was then battering vigorously on the door, to note that the *Speaker* is now dead, the Fabian Society is still very much alive, that one of the men who was responsible for the object of the journal's denunciatory invective has been hailed as the most brilliant social critic and satirist of his age and the greatest living dramatist, another has become a famous and original sociologist, and two others members of the first British Labour Cabinet. A striking instance of Time's revenges.

In the year 1893 the Fabian policy of permeation pure and simple may be said to have come to an end. In that year the society issued its manifesto, "A Plan of Campaign for Labour," in which the workers were urged to form their own political party. Before this fateful year—for it may be claimed that this was the year in which the idea of a definite non-doctrinaire Labour Party on independent lines was first clearly and convincingly advocated—Sydney Olivier had been to some extent drawn away by his official duties from the work of the Fabian Society. During 1890–1 he had been appointed Acting Colonial Secretary for British Honduras. In 1895 he became Auditor-General of the Leeward Isles, a special appointment to examine and reorganise the accounts and finances of the Colony. In the following year he acted as private secretary to the Earl of Selborne, Under-Secretary for the Colonies, and as Secretary to the West Indian Royal Commission. The next year found him at Washington, assisting in the reciprocity negotiations on behalf of the West Indian Colonies. The knowledge and experience he thus gained of the West Indies brought him promotion to the position of Colonial Secretary of Jamaica, which he occupied with great success from 1899 to 1904. Thrice during this period he was Acting Governor—in 1900, 1902, and 1904. On returning to England he filled the post of Principal Clerk to the West Africa and West Indian Department of the Colonial Office from 1904 to 1907. By this time he had become a recognised

authority on the West Indies and was well qualified to act as Governor of the important colony of Jamaica, to which position he was appointed in 1907.

The reason for his appointment was somewhat exceptional, and indicated that the Colonial Office held a high opinion of his administrative and diplomatic capacity. In 1907, Kingston, the capital of Jamaica, and other towns on the island were nearly wiped out by a disastrous earthquake, and three United States cruisers conveyed relief supplies to the suffering inhabitants. The not unusual accompaniments of such calamities—looting and general disturbance—took place, and the United States commander wanted to land marines to quell the disorder among the coloured population. This the governor refused to permit, and friction ensued. Thereupon the British Government recalled the angry Governor and sent Sydney Olivier, duly knighted, to take his place.

Jamaica, described as being something like an earthly paradise, luxuriant in fruit and aromatic spices, and, for the most part of the year, with its foliage laden with blooms—an island

“ Which all the year is glad with bloom and girt
By groves made green from the bright streamlets’ wave,
Soft are its slopes and cool its fragrant shades ”—

was a great change of environment for the Fabian pioneer. But the efficiency, tact, and energy which he had displayed in other and very different spheres were brought equally to bear upon the tasks which his governorship entailed. He was not by any means the customary British superior official. Alertness and dignified geniality he possessed, the usual attributes of Englishmen who occupy similar high positions; but his early interests had brought out other and more striking qualities. He was keenly observant not only of the political side of the life of the island, but also of its social and economic aspects, which were of a special character owing to the vast majority of the population being of the coloured race. He governed with a firm but kindly hand, and displayed an unusual breadth of vision in the policy of his administration. Skilfully he introduced reforms in his council, which consisted of ten members nominated by the Government, fourteen elected and five ex-officio members. The result was that Jamaica during his term of office was one of the most contented and peaceful colonies of the British Empire, and his

departure in 1913 to England to take up the duties of the Permanent Secretaryship of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries was keenly regretted by all sections of the island community.

One of the advantages of being associated with the Fabian Society in its young and most strenuous years was that it not only aroused in its members an absorbing interest in most of the outstanding problems of the time, but also brought them into contact with many sides of our complex social system. Sydney Olivier is not only an economist, a politician, a writer of no mean order on art, philosophy, and literature, but also the possessor of knowledge regarding agriculture. A number of articles on this subject from his pen show that he is not a mere amateur in this by no means easy subject. He was therefore well qualified, both by administrative experience and understanding, for the change from the West Indies to the cooler atmosphere of Whitehall. He remained at the head of the staff of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries until 1917, when he was made Assistant Comptroller and Auditor of Exchequer, retiring in 1920 in order to devote himself to what he has described as the recreations of loafing and dilettantism, but which most men would consider to be intellectual industry.

He has jestingly referred to his appointment as Secretary of State for India as being due most probably to the fact that he had been accustomed to wear all kinds of uniforms and orders. But his inclusion in the Cabinet was undoubtedly because of his practical experience and cognisance of Imperial problems. It is true, British Honduras, the Leeward Islands, West Africa, and Jamaica are not Hindustan, but there are sufficient likenesses between these portions of the widely sundered British Empire to enable Sydney Olivier to win on the far larger field a record equal to that which he earned in the West Indies. There are not many men living who have a greater and more sympathetic insight into this profound problem of the relations between races of different colour, tradition, habit, and history. This is proved by his well-known book *White Capital and Coloured Labour*, which has no rival as an exposition of a subject that is rapidly becoming one of the most urgent and difficult problems which every European country possessing colonies and dependencies will have to face.

Sydney Olivier, both physically and intellectually, gave

distinction to the first Labour Ministry. He was called to a position which demanded from him all the tact, judgment, mental agility, knowledge, and experience which his long and varied career have added to his natural capacity.

But if he were asked which period of his life has given him greatest satisfaction—the time when, as a young man, “with a passion for reforming the world,” he with his three Fabian companions challenged the justice and equity of the existing social order, or the term of his office as Governor of Jamaica, or the occupancy of a seat in the gilded chamber—it is probable that he would express preference for the rebellious days of his youth. For although one poet has invited us to grow old along with him for “the best is yet to be,” another has said of a similar period in a similar age of unrest to our own :

“Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven.”

And it must be remembered that Sydney Olivier has something of the poet in his outlook upon life, and, in spite of his commanding and dignified demeanour, a spark of the youthful rebel spirit still glows within him.

Forty years ago Sydney Olivier, who, it would have appeared, had everything to gain by accepting things as they were and opposing change, courageously attacked the fundamental basis of society, and not only hailed “the unseen with a cheer,” but helped to make its realisation possible.

RT. HON. JOSIAH C. WEDGWOOD, D.S.O., M.P.

LABOUR'S FIRST CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY
OF LANCASTER

MORE than a decade ago Mr. Philip Snowden, in an article written for a politico-literary periodical, described the subject of this sketch as a "philosophical anarchist to whom the State is the embodiment of the most objectionable tyranny." At that time few would have ventured to predict with certainty the accession to Cabinet rank either of Philip Snowden or of Josiah Wedgwood, and assuredly none of those would have expected them to be members of the same Cabinet. The two were separated by the breadth of two formidable ideas: the one was as convinced an exponent of esoteric Socialism as was the other a single-minded advocate of the land tax.

It may be said here, without entering into the merits of the controversy which at one time waxed fierce between them, that Mr. Snowden's characterisation possessed a validity of which time has not in the least deprived him. Time, however, has mollified the anarchist and "gingered up" the philosopher, the effect being to render the blend of identities more compact and homogeneous.

George Josiah Clement Wedgwood was born at Barlaston, Staffs, on 16th March, 1872, at a time when politics as understood by the masses of the people were largely a matter of choice between two or three idolatries. It was the beginning of a period calculated to afford a temperamental iconoclast the fullest opportunities for enjoying life, and the young Wedgwood, since he became old enough to play a part in public affairs, has missed none of the chances which fate proffered him so plenteously. Like his famous forefather, whose name is so renowned among connoisseurs, he has been a discriminating smasher, with a keen eye for failures of inspiration or craftsmanship. It follows that his devotion to those ideals in which he has seen the form of perfection has been

so ardent as almost to deserve the title—more easily achieved than earned—of fanatic.

Anything rather than a political career seemed to be in prospect for the young Wedgwood, who, after a conventional middle-class education at Clifton College, became a cadet at the Royal Naval College at Greenwich. Like many men of exceptional mental power, he displayed a marked taste and aptitude for mathematics, and this inclination, taking a practical instead of an academic turn, led him to the workshops of Elswick. From Elswick he went to Portsmouth as Assistant Naval Constructor: his experience at the busy Admiralty dockyard must have taught him much of the kind of struggle sustained by those whose existence is perpetually beleaguered by the distresses of our economic system. From Portsmouth he returned to Newcastle, to take charge of Messrs. Armstrong's drawing office, and it now seemed as if he had settled down in a career the rewards of which were what he chose to make them. He might, to-day, have been an obscure and successful armament magnate.

The South African War made hay of these possibilities. Messrs. Elswick fitted out a battery of Royal Field Artillery, and of this detachment Wedgwood, then twenty-two years of age, was made commander with the military rank of captain. Three years of campaigning gave him a taste for African life which he was able to satisfy by acting as resident magistrate of the district of Ermelo for two years, 1902-4, during which time he was led by his acquisitive mental habits to make a study of native land laws.

It was as a staunch advocate of land reform in the home country that he made his first appearance on the political stage, in the General Election—already a legend with the Liberals of to-day—of 1906. In accepting nomination as the Liberal candidate for Newcastle-under-Lyme, he made it clear that, while adhering to the general principles of Liberalism as it was then understood, he proposed to act independently in all cases where his judgment indicated independence as the proper attitude. Newcastle-under-Lyme liked this kind of talk, of which in those days constituencies did not get enough, and Colonel Wedgwood went to Parliament in the company of more than four hundred members of the last Liberal Government of the old order.

From the first he was a person of note among a remark-

ably large crowd of nonentities. Among a small but active band of single-tax enthusiasts he distinguished himself by the special fertility of his propaganda, and by the abounding vigour of his attacks on the vested interests which barred the way to the darling reform. In 1908 he became President of the League for the Taxation of Land Values, and thenceforward his output of speeches, tracts, and letters to the Press became wellnigh phenomenal. He became a political Robin Hood, infesting the thickets of St. Stephen's and preying impartially upon the notables of all parties. Orthodox party journals dubbed him a fanatic; it did undoubtedly appear to them that any rank-and-file Liberal who was not purely contented with a state of affairs in which his party had a majority of more than 200 over the Conservatives in the Lower House was somehow only to be accounted for by a major aberration.

The man who had lived two years among the tribes of South Africa cared nothing, however, for the jabber of party aborigines. He went on with his work in his purposeful, aggressive, pugnacious way—his methods did, in fact, contain a measured dose of fanaticism—and was able, if he had cared, to retort on his opponents when, at the General Election of 1910, hundreds of thousands of electors marched to the polls singing the Land Song, supposed by not a few to have been written and composed by Mr. Lloyd George! Colonel Wedgwood was willing that Mr. Lloyd George, who at that date was frequently guessed to be a wizard, should have the credit both of the “land marchers’ Marseillaise” and of the programme which it glorified. He was not willing that either the ballad or the reform should take place among the back numbers of politics merely because the Liberal leaders, who had proclaimed a jihad against vested interests, preferred to abandon the holy war rather than conduct it on lines calculated to hurt anybody’s feelings.

From that period he ceased merely to have no illusions about Liberalism: he began definitely to distrust it. He was even further antagonised by the policy of the Government in its dealings with the Suffragettes. Having given the movement a sort of mystic blessing, they tried to make their position clearer by calling in the police. The ensuing insurrection of the women, and their endurance of severe persecution to the point of martyrdom, afforded many opportunities to a knight-errant of politics, and the victims of Liberal repres-

sion had no stouter champion than the member for Newcastle-under-Lyme.

In July 1913 he graduated as a front-rank Parliamentarian by an amazing single-handed fight against the Government on the Mental Deficiency Bill, and was promptly discovered by the newspapers—it was a warm summer—as the champion obstructionist of the day. The Mental Deficiency Bill was a typical example of the sort of reform in which Asquithian Liberalism specialised, and Colonel Wedgwood thought it a thoroughly tyrannous and detestable measure. For two days he held the House at his mercy, tabling 120 amendments and delivering nearly 150 speeches, and subsisting on an old soldier's diet of barley-water and chocolate. Even a philosophical anarchist could do no more—no ordinary mortal could have done as much—but it was not until his voice left him that he abandoned the struggle. The incident made it sufficiently clear that here was a career worth watching.

The outbreak of war in 1914 gave this happy warrior of politics (as a recent biographer has described him) a different kind of scope for earning distinction. He went out to Gallipoli as a Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Naval Air Service, and was awarded the D.S.O. for his share in conducting operations during the sanguinary landing at Helles Beach. He was wounded in 1915 and subsequently went with the British Expedition in Serbia, where he was promoted to the rank of Major-General. During the latter part of the War he was Assistant Director of Trench Warfare, a post for which his experience as an engineer and his gifts of initiative and enterprise specially fitted him.

Even with these preoccupations weighing upon him, he found time and energy for a "forlorn hope" battle of his own, and was foremost in the fight against the stupidly vindictive persecution of conscientious objectors which disgraced the administration of the period.

Four years of war failed to interrupt Colonel Wedgwood's train of political thought. Returned unopposed as an independent Radical at the Khaki Election of 1918, he remained for a few months in a category of one before taking a step which justified and to a large extent explained the insurgence of his earlier career. Early in 1919 he signified his formal adhesion to the Labour Party, whose pursuit of their aims without reference to the complaints of vested interests was calculated to appeal to the most uncompromising of single-taxers.

Labour, a young and growing party with highly synthesised ideals, is pre-eminently "open to the talents," and the new recruit rapidly attained the eminence to which his abilities and merits entitled him. In 1921 he became Vice-chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, a position which he held until, with the accession of Labour to office in February 1924, he accepted the position of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, with Cabinet rank. It was in many ways a surprising appointment: most people regarded it as a consolation prize, and had not expected that so pronounced an individualist would accept mere consolation. This view did Colonel Wedgwood an injustice. He did what he was asked to do with the single-hearted idea of rendering loyal service to his party and to the community, and with no envious calculation of the political value of the new job. Besides, even a blind alley would become a thoroughfare if Colonel Wedgwood chose that route, and neither friend nor foe believes that his career has been finally rounded off by what looks like a piece of polite irony on the part of Fate. Things like that do happen to some politicians, but they never happen to Colonel Wedgwood: he does the "happening" himself, and the future is going to see him doing it quite as faithfully and nearly as vividly as in the past.

RT. HON. CHARLES PHILIP TREVELYAN, M.P.

LABOUR'S EDUCATION MINISTER

ONE of the outstanding successes of the first Labour Government, the administrative capacity of which was, on its general level, certainly not inferior to that of any of its predecessors, was its Minister of Education. Charles Philip Trevelyan, who was appointed by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald to that post, might have seemed an obvious selection—he had been for six years Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education under the three Liberal administrations which immediately preceded the War; the choice was none the less one which could be vindicated by reference to its object as the able and consistent advocate of all those educational reforms with which the cause of progress is inseparably involved.

Here there is scope for a slight digression of peculiar interest to the exponents of the doctrine of heredity. The Trevelyan family are one of those families who appear to possess their own private recipe for a particular kind of fame. Sir Charles Trevelyan, the permanent head of the Treasury under Gladstone, was, as the contemporary phrase ran, a “man of parts,” with a broader knowledge of men and affairs than most politicians of the period thought it necessary, or even becoming, to possess. His son, Sir George Trevelyan, was a statesman in a good sense of the word, and an author of real attainments; his biography of the historian Macaulay—his maternal uncle—is source to the historians of our own time. The subject of this sketch is the son of Sir George—and incidentally heir to the baronetcy, a circumstance over which a certain type of anti-Socialist likes to giggle—and a part of his intellectual heritage is a marked aptitude for the historical aspect of contemporary politics.

Charles Trevelyan was born in 1871, and was educated at Harrow—where he had for schoolfellows Noel and Roden

Buxton, the former of whom was destined to be his colleague in the first Labour Cabinet—and Cambridge, going down from the University with honours in history. It had by this time been decided, with his full acquiescence, that he was to carve out his career in the political field, and, according to the routine prescribed at that time for young men of fortunate antecedents, he became, at the age of twenty-one, private secretary to Lord Crewe, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Fortune, in this case, had been discriminating in her favours; hard work, enthusiasm, and real ability recommended the young man to his chief, then a notable figure in late nineteenth-century Liberalism, as a promising recruit who might well, with the right kind of encouragement, achieve high rank in the party hierarchy. He was accordingly “tried out” at North Lambeth, in the General Election of 1895, and although he failed to carry the seat, his conduct confirmed all the good opinions entertained of him by his leaders. He turned his defeat to good purpose by making the “grand tour,” according to twentieth-century dimensions, his itinerary including Canada, South Africa, Australia, and our far Eastern dependencies. Four years later a by-election in the Elland division of Yorkshire gave him a second and more promising opportunity, and at the age of twenty-eight he commenced a Parliamentary career which has throughout been marked by a consistency distinct from the mere party worship which so many politicians mistake for adherence to principle.

Consistency was a virtue which the position of affairs in 1899 demanded with peculiar urgency from the champions of the cause of democracy and progress. The Jingoese, having tricked the country into war with the Boers, were busy petrifying the national conscience into a state of rigid terror; it is no exaggeration to say that the Khaki Election of 1900 was largely won by the votes of sections of the populace who believed that Mr. Balfour, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, and their colleagues were their only safeguard against the certainty of being eaten alive by hordes of invading cannibals, led by the ogreish Oom Paul. Charles Trevelyan was one of the much-diminished band of Liberals who survived the Terror, and first gained his spurs as a keen fighter during the six years his party were to spend in Opposition. In 1906 the Tories, who had sown the wind so assiduously six years before, reaped the whirlwind in a spectacular defeat at the polls, and Liberalism went into power with a majority of 356 over all other parties.

Those who mistook party exuberance for reforming zeal anticipated the doing of great deeds in the field of social reconstruction, and it is undoubtedly true that the impetus given to the party led by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman by its electoral victory did carry it some distance along the path of progress. Among the pioneers who strove earnestly to maintain the pace was Charles Trevelyan, who in 1908 attained junior Ministerial rank by his appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education. This appointment furnished him with a task very much after his own heart, and enabled him to view more philosophically the process by which his Government stage-managed its following from one disillusionment to another.

The process was still going on when, in 1914, came that sharp test of principle which so few of that generation of Liberals were to survive. Trevelyan was, both on ethical and intellectual grounds, an uncompromising opponent of war, and did not scruple to sacrifice his unfinished career as a Liberal Minister, with all its prospects, to the principles he held as a Liberal philosopher. He has told in his own words how this great crisis of his career came upon him, and how he met it.

When the war was on the point of exploding I sent for Morel from his holiday. He came at once, and was waiting in my room below the House of Commons while Sir Edward Grey was making his fatal speech.

I went down to him and told him it was war. We went out into the wilderness together with Ramsay MacDonald and a few others. We formed the Union of Democratic Control, of which Morel became the secretary, and so remained for the ten years he still lived.

The decision to launch the Union of Democratic Control, the idea of which had first taken shape in the mind of the late E. D. Morel, was actually taken at an emergency meeting held at Trevelyan's house in Great College Street, Westminster, and the letter announcing its inauguration and inviting the co-operation of men and women of goodwill which appeared in the *Morning Post* shortly afterwards, bore the signatures of Morel, Trevelyan, Ramsay MacDonald, and Norman Angell.

Amid the tumult and the shouting of the ensuing four years the Union of Democratic Control strove with the sick soul of the body politic with a patience and fortitude not

to be worn out or broken down by the delirious calumnies of the "patriotic" and profiteering factions. Morel was perhaps the favourite target of the mud-slingers—his exposure of the Congo atrocities had raised up powerful enemies from among the friends in this country of the wretched old King Leopold of Belgium—but the other members of the U.D.C. got their full share of crazy vituperation. Trevelyan was attacked in his constituency of Elland, where a noisy agitation for his resignation was kept up spasmodically with the aid of the more disreputable section of the press. Official Liberalism was undoubtedly against him, and their hostility was enhanced by indications that the ex-Minister was becoming critical of Liberal policy from more points of view than those comprised in his creed as a pacifist. The breach was complete when, in 1918, he announced his adhesion to the Labour Party; at the general election of that year he stood definitely for Labour, and the coupon-mongers obtained a measure of revenge when, for the second time in his career, he suffered defeat at the polls.

By this time, however, the wilderness had become comparatively populous. The current of public opinion began to set steadily against the Coalition while it was still brawling of its electoral victory. Labour, now the effective Opposition in Parliament, was working still more effectively among the people, and every progressive movement of the day marched parallel to the line of advance of political Labour and shared its prosperity. The Union of Democratic Control thrived mightily: its founders, with a long line of prophecies fulfilled to their credit, found the nation now penitently eager to listen to the message they had to deliver.

In four years of intensive propaganda the most was made of these plenteous opportunities, and the harvest reaped at the general election of 1922 justified the courage of the optimists. Trevelyan, who had been adopted as Labour candidate for the Central division of Newcastle-on-Tyne, scored a notable victory over a Conservative and a "Wee Free," whose combined votes he exceeded by more than 2,000, and during the short-lived administration of Mr. Bonar Law and Mr. Baldwin proved that his four years' absence from the green benches had not deprived him of his ability as a Parliamentary debater. The elections of 1923, which brought into being the first Labour administration in Great Britain, brought him well-deserved recognition. His appointment as Minister

of Education was not regarded by everybody as inevitable : there were one or two alternative candidates for the post whose claims were not to be dismissed summarily : yet there was no questioning anywhere of the fitness of the ultimate choice made by the Labour Premier.

Trevelyan's view of the responsibilities he was thus called upon to undertake has been admirably expressed in his own words. Writing in the Labour Magazine in March 1924, he said :

We have before our minds as our objective advanced education for all our people. We refuse to think only about the clever boys and girls. Who indeed can tell which the clever ones are at twelve years old ? All normal children of the working and lower middle class ought to have precisely the same chance of full education as the normal child of the wealthy has to-day. We don't ask whether the son of a country gentleman is clever before we give him the chance of being educated in a public school, nor ought that question to be asked of other children.

All that the Labour Minister of Education set himself to perform he did perform, as far as his opportunities allowed, ably, conscientiously, and with a certain characteristic detachment from considerations of temporal political advantage which was tacitly acknowledged even by partisan critics. There were, of course, a million grumbles from reactionary "economists" for every hundred pounds he proposed to apply in this truly fruitful form of national investment, but the usual charges of disingenuousness were not heard : he was not even accused, except of course by the faddists, of faddism. The merit of the work he did was that, despite the many disadvantages under which it was performed, it had throughout a quality of permanence ; it was remarked by commentators in the Tory press after the Labour Government met defeat in the election of 1924, that of all the great departments of State the Board of Education showed the deepest impress of Labour policy. In Opposition, he will find his rôle as an advocate of ideals which are none the less alive because of their temporary supersession, and as a commentator whose views have already proved their worth to his party, to Parliament, and to the country at large.

RT. HON. F. W. JOWETT

FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS IN THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

TO the Rt. Hon. Frederick William Jowett, the First Commissioner of Works in the Labour Government, belongs the distinction of being classified as one of the veterans of the Labour Movement, for he has to his credit nearly forty years of hard and self-sacrificing service on behalf of the cause.

An indefatigable worker where any deserving object is concerned, and a man of broad vision and high ideals, he has often been impelled by the dictates of his conscience to tread the lonely and unpopular path of the pioneer, in circumstances where a less steadfast man might have faltered. For him, however, the promptings of expediency and the temptation to compromise have held no attraction. Deep down in his heart, and clearly in his mind, was visualised quite early in his life the ultimate goal that emerged from his close study of social problems, and with all the zeal of the missionary he has kept his eyes resolutely trained on the objective ever since. A more comfortable passage through life he might easily have chosen—but that would have been at the sacrifice of his principles—a course he would never consider for a moment. Accordingly, as a young man, he relinquished an important commercial position in order that his mission of spreading the gospel of Socialism might be the more effectively pursued. From a similar motive he twice brought upon himself defeat in Parliamentary elections, when by trimming his sails he could have gained and retained his seat on those occasions. As a man of peace, he took his stand determinedly against both the Boer War and the Great War of more recent days. That this would mean sacrificing his public position on the altar of popular passion and prejudice he was fully aware, but, believing in the ultimate righteousness of his attitude, he dared to pay the price, and, like the other few who thought with him when the view he took was to say the least unfashionable, he has lived to see his opinions shared by the multitude.

In the election of 1900, his conscience cost him the constituency of West Bradford—which he then contested for the first time—and his narrow minority of 41 votes shows how easily he might have won the fight had he chosen to take the view which he could see was popular—but which he felt was not the proper one. Again in 1918, after he had represented West Bradford continuously from 1906, he once more philosophically bore the brunt of defeat in East Bradford as the alternative to deviating from his honest convictions. The calmer atmosphere of the polls in 1922, however, gave the electors of East Bradford the opportunity to send him back to the House of Commons with a majority of 3,647 over the candidate who had beaten him by 753 in the Khaki Election, and in 1923 he increased his majority to 5,562. His well-deserved office in the Ministry was thereupon proffered and accepted, and after fulfilling its duties with an efficiency that has never been surpassed, fate's shadow again hovered over his electoral fortunes, and the stunt campaign of the opposition parties brought him defeat by a mere handful of votes for the second time in his career in the 1924 Election.

Nevertheless, he would be a bold and irresponsible prophet who ventured to suggest that the Parliamentary days of Fred Jowett are over. His good work at Westminster can never be permanently forgotten by the people he has served so well. He has been an expert and hard-working member, for some years, of the Local Legislation Committee, a constant advocate of the policy of the immunity of merchant ships from capture during war-time, and one of the most active participants in the campaign pursued by the Labour Party during the late War to keep down the cost of living. Soon after the introduction of the Old Age Pensions Bill he protested against the Pauper Disqualification that had been embodied in the scheme, and used his utmost efforts in an endeavour to secure its removal. On behalf of the workers in the wool industry—of whom there are tens of thousands in the city of Bradford—he fought vigorously in order that they might be provided with more adequate safeguards against the contraction of anthrax, and his efforts were attended with a large measure of success. His advocacy brought about the establishment of a Departmental Committee, and subsequently led to the disinfecting station for wool being set up at Liverpool. Moreover, he was a courageous champion of the interests of the ex-service pensioners, and it was his motion,

backed up by a powerful speech, that finally induced the Coalition Government to accept responsibility for pensions in cases of illness "aggravated" as well as "caused" by military service. On behalf of necessitous school children, too, he promoted and piloted through the House a measure to continue their feeding, at the expense of the local education authority, throughout the school holidays as well as when they were in attendance at school.

The hard struggles of his early years, and the valuable administrative experience that he gained on the Bradford City Council and other local bodies, have made him a Labour leader and spokesman of the highest order. Born in Bradford in 1864, he entered the mill as a half-timer at the age of 8, and as a full-timer at 13 years of age. By attending the classes held at the Mechanics' Institute and the Technical School he made up for his lack of early education, and familiarised himself with practically every branch of the wool textile industry. At the age of 18, his technical knowledge secured for him the position of weaving overlooker and ten years later he became a manufacturer's assistant, a post which he held until he was prevailed upon to relinquish it by the pressure of his public duties.

He first came into public notice at the age of 23 as a frequent contributor to the Press, and was one of the first writers—if not *the* first—to urge the independent representation of Labour in Parliament, on a basis that was free from the influence of the other parties. He has continued his writings, and during a later period was editor of the *Bradford Pioneer*, a weekly Labour journal.

In 1892 he was elected to the City Council, and he immediately commenced that active work in health, housing, land and municipal ownership questions for which he has since become famous. Many of Bradford's enterprises in municipal Socialism were due to the pressure which he brought to bear. His fight for free scholarships for the children of Bradford was a memorable victory, and during the thirteen years which he spent on the Council prior to his resignation on being elected to Parliament in 1906, he was for eight successive years the chairman of the Health Committee. He boasts that he is the only member of the Council who has ever been subjected to a vote of censure—this being the outcome of his denunciation of the Council for submitting a misleading return to the Local Government Board—but it is significant to note

that within twelve months of the censure, the same Council elected him an alderman.

Other departments of Bradford's local life in which he has served have been the Board of Guardians, the Chamber of Commerce, the Trades and Labour Council, of which he was secretary for three years, the Bradford I.L.P., of which he was the founder and for many years the secretary, the first Bradford Board of Conciliation between Employers and Workmen, the Directorial Boards of the Bradford Industrial Provident Society and the Airedale Co-operative Manufacturing Society, and the Committee of the Power Loom Overlookers' Society.

In the national affairs of the Labour Movement he is a member of the National Executive of the Labour Party and the National Administrative Council of the I.L.P. He was the chairman of the Labour Party in 1922-3, and of the I.L.P. in 1909-10 and 1914-17. He was one of the founders of both bodies, and was also an early member of the Union of Democratic Control, which has done so much in the cause of peace.

Before his elevation to Ministerial rank he was the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee in the House of Commons, and has written extensively in support of the reform of Parliamentary Procedure, a topic upon which he is acknowledged to be an expert.

RT. HON. F. O. ROBERTS, M.P.

LABOUR'S FIRST PENSIONS MINISTER

WHEN the Labour Party was called upon to form His Majesty's Government, there were no two opinions as to who should be charged with the administration of the Pensions Ministry. Mr. Frederick Owen Roberts, the member for West Bromwich, had since his election in 1918 been a capable and consistent champion of the interests of ex-service men, and in addition was the chairman of the War Pensions Committee of the Labour Party. His selection by Mr. MacDonald to fill the office of Minister of Pensions, therefore, was welcomed not only by his colleagues in the Labour Movement, but by the ex-service men of the country as a whole.

Of pleasing personality and picturesque appearance, Mr. Roberts is comparatively young as the holders of high ministerial office are reckoned. The son of a bootmaker, he was born less than fifty years ago, the year being 1876, in the Northamptonshire village of East Haddon, and after singing in the village choir and receiving a rudimentary education at the local school, he became an apprentice to the printing trade at Northampton, eight miles away from his native hamlet.

The printer, by virtue of his occupation, is frequently blessed with an insatiable quest for knowledge, and young Roberts was no exception to the general rule. After diligently plying his craft by day, he devoted himself to school and home study in the evenings, first under the auspices of the Local Evening Classes, and later with the guidance of the Workers' Educational Association.

His pronounced qualities for leadership and his genuine administrative ability impressed themselves so markedly upon his fellow-workers that he was called upon to represent them in several capacities during the twenty-five years that he spent at the compositor's case and the linotype keyboard. From the secretaryship of the Northampton branch of the Typographical Association he rose to be a member of the

National Executive, and its secretary for the Midland District, an office which he at present holds. His success as a Trade-Union negotiator was conspicuous, and was enhanced by his unfailing honesty of purpose, which has always commanded the trust and respect of the other side.

Outside the confines of his own craft he was an equally energetic worker on behalf of the poor and unfortunate of Northampton. He was the treasurer of the local branch of the National League of the Blind, the secretary of the local branch of the Lifeboat Fund Committee, a member of the Town Relief Fund Committee, the Allied Charities Executive, the Belgian Relief Fund Committee, the Management Committee of the Northampton Blind Institute, the Labour Exchange Advisory Committee and the Juvenile Advisory Committee, of which latter body he was vice-chairman. Ever a keen friend of the ex-soldier and sailor, he was a member of the War Pensions Committees of Northampton and the East Midlands, whilst he also served on the Committee of the Northampton War Savings Executive.

The Friendly Society and Co-operative Movements have also engaged his attention, and in addition to being a member of the Hearts of Oak Friendly Society, he is a staunch co-operator and a frequent speaker at Co-operative Conferences and meetings, whilst as a speaker in the Brotherhood Movement he is in constant demand.

His work on behalf of the Trade-Union and Labour Movement of Northampton has been invaluable. For many years he was the secretary of the local Trades Council and Labour Party, and it was largely owing to his tactful influence that the activities of the various Socialist and Labour bodies existent there were co-ordinated along united lines. He has been a delegate to many conferences of the National Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress, and is a member of the executive of the former body. When his election to Parliament in 1918 necessitated his resignation from the positions he held in Northampton, the appreciation of his fellow-townsmen—who had previously elevated him to the magisterial bench—was conveyed to him by a public presentation, in addition to which the Trades Council appointed him an honorary vice-president for life.

So far as his advent to Parliamentary affairs was concerned, the victorious contest which he fought at West Bromwich was one of the most memorable of the Khaki Elec-

tion. He did not deliberately seek the honour—it was thrust upon him by his fellow-printers who appreciated and valued his work and ability. Few of the constituencies that were fought that year presented greater difficulties. He only entered it six weeks before the date appointed for polling, and was opposed by the son of the ground landlord of the town, who had won the seat on two occasions previously. The Labour Party had never contested the seat before, and its machinery of organisation had consequently not been developed to the highest pitch of perfection. Nevertheless, his honesty, ability, and wide understanding of public questions, coupled with the scrupulous sense of fair play which he manifested even under the most trying conditions of the contest, secured him the seat by the handsome majority of over 1,700 votes.

His record in the House has proved that the confidence thus reposed in him was not misplaced, and his subsequent re-election in 1922, 1923, and 1924 shows that the electors have not repented of their choice. From the Opposition benches he constantly submitted the Ministerial representatives to cross-examination on the question of war pensions, and was consistent in his advocacy of anything that tended to improve the helpless and those who were precluded from fighting for themselves. The aged, the blind, the nurses, and the police were all subjects for reasoned and eloquent appeals on his part to the generosity and justice of the House. When, by the evolution of political events, he was transferred to the Treasury Bench, he at once introduced the human touch into the Ministry of Pensions, and devoted himself to breaking down, as far as possible, any bureaucratic hardships to which pensioners were still subjected. The allowances to parents were increased, sick benefits were restored to war widows and orphans, the seven years' limit for claims was abolished, and the stigma of pauperism was removed from those whose war service had brought about mental derangement. All these large-hearted actions were typical of the new spirit that he introduced into the administration of the Pensions Ministry—and they were typical, too, of the characteristics that Mr. Roberts had exhibited throughout his whole career.

In his private life he is as human as in the public sphere he is humane. At the age of 23 he was happily married to Miss Celia Dorothea Sexton, of Northampton, in whom he found a co-operating helpmeet and a comrade in the cause. His one son volunteered during the War as a wireless operator

at the age of 17, and was subsequently transferred to the Royal Air Force.

His recreations include bowling—he is the captain of the Parliamentary Labour Party's Bowling Team—and music, in which connection he is an expert violinist. He has entered into the sporting spirit of his constituency by accepting the vice-chairmanship of the West Bromwich Albion Football Club.

A man of the people, he is—so far as West Bromwich is concerned—undoubtedly the People's Man.

MISS MARGARET BONDFIELD

THE FIRST WOMAN IN THE MINISTRY

THE Trade-Union and Labour Movement of this country has no more conspicuous characteristic than that represented by the sincerity with which it cherishes the policy of sex equality. To it belonged the distinction in 1924 of being the first political party to appoint one of its women as a member of the Ministry. The subject of this honourable selection was Miss Margaret Bondfield, J.P., who also, a few months previously, had been unanimously elected by her colleagues of the Trades Union Congress General Council—a large majority of whom were men—as chairman of that important and influential body—the industrial Parliament of the British workers.

True, this attitude towards the women in the Trade-Union Movement has not always prevailed, and Miss Bondfield herself could quote many an instance of the suspicion and hostility with which the male Trade Unionists greeted the early efforts of herself and her comrades to organise the women workers. The period of the last thirty years, however, has seen nothing short of a revolution in the position of the women. The policy that Miss Bondfield and the other women leaders adopted in the early days aimed at demonstrating to the workers that, whether men or women, their interests were the same, and that between them as workers or as citizens there was no fundamental conflict. How thoroughly that policy has triumphed we know full well to-day, for there never was greater solidarity of the sexes in the industrial world, or a more whole-hearted determination to pool their efforts in defence of the common cause.

The story of Miss Bondfield's life, therefore, is almost unconsciously the story of the rise of the working-woman to industrial and political emancipation. She was born at Chard, in Somersetshire, where her father followed the craft

of a lace designer, but she herself turned her thoughts towards other occupations. More than an elementary education was denied to her, but so early did her talents manifest themselves that at the age of 13 years she was acting as a supply teacher to a boys' class in a Board School.

Three years later she was apprenticed to a firm of colonial outfitters, and for the next eleven years she underwent a varied experience of shop life in London and the provinces. The inhuman conditions of labour to which shop assistants were subjected in those days soon aroused in her the spirit of revolt. The Shop Assistants' Union obtained in her, in 1894, an eager recruit, and her vigour, sincerity, and eloquence soon won for her a leading place in the organisation. In 1896 she attended the Annual Delegate Meeting of the Union, being the first woman to do so. In the same year she commenced a two years' special investigation of London shop conditions, and the results, embodied in her reports, and subsequently published in the London Press, provoked all decent-minded people to a sense of indignation at the evils of the living-in system, the fines, dismissals, bad food, low wages, long hours, restrictions on liberty, and petty tyrannies of the shops.

In 1898, on the amalgamation of the unions engaged in the distributive trades, she was appointed Assistant Secretary, and for ten years in that office she carried on an unceasing campaign against the inhumanities that she had already revealed. In 1899 she read a paper on "The Conditions of Employment in Shops" to the British Economic Association, and this was afterwards published in the *Economic Journal*. In 1904 she similarly read a paper on "The Effect on Health of Women's Employment in Shops," before the Congress of the Sanitary Institute at Glasgow.

Her association with the Trades Union Congress began in 1899, in which year, as a representative of the Shop Assistants' Union, she was the only woman delegate at the Plymouth Congress. Her maiden speech on that occasion was a significant one, for it was delivered in support of the now historic resolution which led to the formation of the Labour Party. Eighteen years later, at the Blackpool Congress of 1917, she was elected to the Parliamentary Committee of the Congress—the equivalent of the present General Council—being the first woman upon whom that signal honour had ever been conferred. Curiously enough, it was at the Plymouth Congress again, in 1923, that she was elected chairman of the General

Council. Her period of office in that capacity opened with great promise, for the year was a momentous one in working-class history, but the formation of the Labour Government in January 1924 necessitated her resignation from the position upon her inclusion in the Government.

In 1908 she resigned her position as Assistant Secretary to the Shop Assistants' Union in order that she might devote her efforts to the wider interests of the Labour Movement as a speaker and writer. The platforms both of the Labour Party and the I.L.P. engaged her attention, but she also served on the executive of the Women's Trade Union League, whose Secretary was the late Miss Mary MacArthur, and with which she became associated in 1896, when Sir Charles Dilke introduced his Shops Bill into the House of Commons coincidentally with Miss Bondfield's exposures of the sweated shops.

Just before the War she again took up a Trade-Union appointment, becoming the Organising Secretary of the National Federation of Women Workers. At the same time she continued her efforts on the political side, and succeeded the late Mrs. Ramsay MacDonald as Organising Secretary of the Women's Labour League, which subsequently became the Women's Section of the Labour Party. At this time also she was one of the leading figures in the I.L.P., being a propagandist speaker whose services were in great demand, and a member of the National Administrative Council.

When the War broke out she served upon many of the Statutory Committees that were established, notably the Central Committee on Women's Unemployment and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the Ministry of Munitions. Along with Miss Mary MacArthur she was a member of the War Emergency Worker's National Committee, and played an important part in improving the conditions of the women workers in the munition industries, and in securing their allegiance to Trade-Union membership.

Just after the National Federation of Women Workers had become the Women's Section of the National Union of General Workers—she being its Chief Woman Officer—the death of Miss Mary MacArthur in 1921 brought heavier responsibilities to Miss Bondfield. She succeeded almost automatically to many of the positions that her colleague had held, including the chairmanship of the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organisations, which embraced practically all the democratic women's movements in the country.

In the international sphere her activities have been equally unremitting and extensive. She is the Vice-President of the International Federation of Working-Women, and with Mary MacArthur she attended the first International Labour Conference under the League of Nations, as one of the Labour Advisers. This was at Washington in 1919, and she made history by her vigorous fight in favour of raising the age of child workers in India from 9 to 14 as a first step towards equalising industrial conditions throughout the world. In a similar capacity she attended the Geneva Convention in 1921, whilst at the International Labour Office Conference under the League of Nations in 1924 she was the direct representative of the British Government, the first woman to discharge that responsible duty. She made a magnificent stand in favour of the international forty-eight-hour week, and assured the representatives of the nations there assembled that the British Labour Government would leave no effort untried in its endeavours to legalise that measure so far as this country was concerned.

She also attended the International Conference at Berne in 1918, the French Trade Union Congress at Paris in the same year, the Congress of the American Federation of Labour at Atlantic City, and was also a member of the British delegation to Russia appointed by the Trades Union Congress in 1920.

As becomes so outstanding a champion of women's rights, she was the Deputy Chairman of the People's Suffrage Federation, and at the first L.C.C. election at which women candidates were eligible in 1910 she stood for Woolwich, and polled nearly seven thousand votes.

Her first Parliamentary Contest was in April 1920, at the Northampton by-election, when Mr. C. A. McCurdy, the sitting Coalition-Liberal, was called upon to defend his seat in consequence of his appointment as Food Controller. Miss Bondfield polled over thirteen thousand votes, but was beaten, nevertheless, by 3,371. She adhered to the constituency, and by the arrival of the General Election in 1922 she had added over one thousand votes to her poll. Still she was unsuccessful, however, but her return to Parliament came at the third time of asking, in 1923, with the magnificent poll of 15,666 votes, and a majority of more than four thousand over her nearest opponent.

Thereupon she was selected by Mr. MacDonald to enter the Ministry as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of

Labour, a position which, by virtue of the prominence of the unemployment problem, was one of paramount importance. Her eloquence in the debating chamber, her wide experience of industrial affairs, and her general forcefulness of character and deep sincerity stamped her immediately as an unqualified success in the position to which she had been called. The Ministry of Labour was continually under fire from the Opposition benches, but Miss Bondfield loyally and brilliantly supported her chief, the Rt. Hon. Tom Shaw, M.P., and they succeeded in beating off attack after attack. Similarly at the offices of the Ministry there was much valuable work accomplished during their regime, and an entirely new atmosphere in the regulation of industrial affairs was introduced. Bills were prepared and passed for the more liberal alleviation of the distressed and the unemployed, the Trade Boards system was extended, and a huge programme of relief work was co-ordinated and supervised.

That she should have been defeated at the polls in the election of 1924 was a matter of great regret, not only to the members of her own party, but to every man and woman of goodwill throughout the country. None of them believes, however, that her absence from Westminster is anything more than a passing phase, and there is not the slightest doubt that ere many more years have elapsed she will be selected again as a creator of even more epoch-making history than she has been in the past.

MR. HARRY GOSLING, C.H., J.P., M.P., L.C.C.

LABOUR'S FIRST MINISTER OF TRANSPORT

AT a period in industrial history when the problem of modernising and improving the nation's transport system occupied a position of the first importance, it was fitting that the Labour Prime Minister should have had at his command a man whose whole life had been bound up with the question, not only as a Trade-Union leader and as an administrator, but as a worker in the industry as well. Such a man was Mr. Harry Gosling, President of the Transport and General Workers' Union, as clear-headed, thoughtful, and capable a Minister of Transport as could have been selected. Though young in Parliamentary experience—he was only elected in 1923—he has served for over a quarter of a century on the L.C.C. and several other administrative bodies, and has a knowledge of public requirements which is equalled by few.

He was born in 1861, and has crowded into the sixty-three years of his lifetime a very vast and varied first-hand knowledge of men and affairs, much of which has been gleaned on the banks of the Thames. The home of his birth was situated in a little back street amongst the wharves which used to abut on the South Bank of the river, but near the spot where now stands the County Hall, the home of the L.C.C., in which for a long time he led the contingent of Labour representatives.

The forces both of heredity and environment decreed that he should look to the river as the source of his livelihood, for he came of a family which for five generations had plied its craft along that great waterway. On leaving the elementary school at Blackfriars, he worked for a short time as an office boy, and then embarked upon a seven years' apprenticeship as a lighterman and waterman. He continued on the river until 1893, when his Trade Union, the Amalgamated Society of Watermen, Lightermen, and Bargemen, elected him to an official position. Two years later he was appointed to the General

Secretaryship, and held that office until 1921, when, on the merging of his organisation along with a dozen others into the Transport and General Workers' Union, he was elected as its first President.

Those qualities of leadership that had earned for him the confidence of his fellow-workers were put to the sternest possible test by the great transport strike of 1911. He was called upon to act as chairman of the Strike Committee, and the success with which he acquitted himself in the face of enormous difficulty is now a matter of history. It is generally recognised that to the efforts of Gosling and his colleague Ben Tillett are largely due the successful issue to which the dispute was carried, resulting in the first agreement governing conditions of port labour being secured. Another dispute in which he took a leading part was the London Transport Strike of 1912, whilst he was also one of the members of the Court of Inquiry, presided over by Lord Shaw in 1920, which worked out the new Dockers' Settlement, and of the Court of Inquiry into the Tramways Industry in the same year.

He continued to act as President of the Transport Workers' Federation until 1921, when, on the formation of the Transport and General Workers' Union—the largest organisation of transport workers in the country—he was almost automatically elevated to the presidency of the new body. On entering the Ministry when the Labour Government was formed, he resigned from the position, but on the completion of his term of office he was invited to return.

Amongst his other activities, it may be mentioned that since 1909 he has been a member of the Port of London Authority, he has served on the Civil Service Arbitration Board, and when the Industrial Council was formed in 1911 he became one of the Trade-Union representatives. During the War his services were in great demand, and he devoted himself assiduously to many of the war-time committees, notably the War Graves Commission, the Special Grants Committee of the Ministry of Pensions, the Belgian Refugees' Committee, Lord Balfour of Burleigh's Committee on Industrial Policy, and the Port and Transit Executive Committee, the body that was charged with the regulation of all incoming and outgoing vessels. His work on this committee was specially praised in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister of that time—Mr. Asquith—and he was invested with the Companionship of Honour in recognition of his services. The only two

previous recipients of the honour were the Prince of Wales and General Smuts.

Quite early in his Trade-Union career he was selected to represent his colleagues on various delegations, including the London Trades Council and the Trades Union Congress. Over the former body he presided for two years, whilst at the 1908 T.U.C. he was elected to the Parliamentary Committee—now the General Council—and in 1916 he presided over the Birmingham Congress. He has studied closely the conditions of Labour in other countries, and in 1917 he went to the U.S.A. as the fraternal delegate from this country to the American Federation of Labour, whilst he also assisted in the formation of the new Labour and Socialist International at Hamburg, and for some time acted as its treasurer.

In few spheres has he been able to render such useful service as on the London County Council, which he entered twenty-six years ago. He took his seat along with John Burns and the late Will Crooks as a left-wing member of the Progressive Party, but was active in the 1919 movement which led to the formation of a Labour Party on the Council. He became the leader of this group, and spent one year as vice-chairman of the Council, being the only Labour member to hold that position. With one exception of a few weeks, his membership of the Council has been continuous.

In the Parliamentary election of 1922 he unsuccessfully contested the Kennington constituency, but the death of his old friend and colleague of the L.C.C., Mr. C. J. Mathew, K.C., caused a by-election and gave him the opportunity of entering Parliament as the representative of the Whitechapel Division of Stepney in January 1923, with a majority of over two thousand votes. He retained the seat in the General Elections of 1923 and 1924, and was given a place in the Labour Ministry when it was formed.

One of the first public functions at which he appeared after he became Minister of Transport was the unveiling of a war memorial to the boys of his former school who fell in the Great War.

Though his own education, so long ago, was necessarily scanty as compared with the facilities at the disposal of the boys of to-day, he has managed to spend his life with great advantage to his fellows. He is regarded with a wide measure of affection by the hundreds of thousands of men whom he is privileged to lead, and with respect by the representatives of

the other side with whom he is frequently brought into contact. His genial and unassuming personality has created for him a whole host of friends, and there is nothing that gives him greater pleasure than to recount to them his stories of life as it was lived along the riverside half a century ago.

His loyalty to the movement is beyond all doubt, and it is well known by many people that several tempting offers of remunerative posts, both from Government and private sources, have been made to him, but he has refused to desert the men for whose interests he has stood so long, and who in return have almost invariably stood solidly by him.

RT. HON. BEN SPOOR, M.P.

CHIEF WHIP IN THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT

SOME people are born popular; some achieve popularity; some have it thrust upon them. Benjamin Charles Spoor belongs to all three of these categories, and the fact cannot be mentioned too early in a biography which has to take account of a personality as salient as any to be found among active politicians of the day.

Ben Spoor—to use a sturdy abbreviation authorised to all men of goodwill—was born at Bishop Auckland in 1878, the year in which was coined a phrase so fatal to the welfare of our generation: “Peace with Honour.” He received his education in the local board school, and at the age of 14 left school for his father’s workshop, where he was apprenticed as an engineer. Afterwards he went into business on his own account as a builders’ merchant.

Active mental habits, and an accurate perception of the importance of education as an asset to the individual, led him to continue his studies through the years of adolescence, and when at the age of 25 he joined the local branch of the Independent Labour Party his knowledge of political affairs, though lacking the confirmation of experience, was so considerable as to render him prominent in party councils. The I.L.P. have from their inception been distinguished by the close and sagacious attention they have given to municipal affairs. In 1903 the I.L.P.’ers of Bishop Auckland made a vigorous move for more effective representation on the Urban District Council, and young Spoor was among those of their members whose candidature was carried through to success. Those were days when the mere mention of community rights gave the vested interests shuddering premonitions of revolution, chaos, and the end of the world. It was the task of Socialists of that day, as it continues to be of the Socialists of our own time, to make it clear to their fellow-citizens that the welfare of the community generally

was attainable without the least sacrifice of goodwill or common sense; that these two qualities, in fact, were essential to good government in local as in national affairs. Ben Spoor thoroughly understood the rôle of his party no less than the needs of the times. During the thirteen years that he held his seat on the Council he passed the chair of all of its important Committees, as well as of the Council itself. As Chairman of the Education Committee he rendered particularly valuable service. He made unceasing war on all those prejudices against "free education" which have done so much to restrict the scope of a decidedly half-hearted measure. If there had been in his temperamental make-up any trait of the fanatic it would have probably found expression on this topic of education.

The years spent in the service of his native town formed no bad preparation for the larger tasks to which he was to be called upon to address himself. He had contrived, in the midst of a press of public and private business, to take an increasingly active part in the work of spreading the doctrines on which his own political career had been formed. Frequent practice in the art of oratory, both from the platform and the pulpit, had improved native gifts of a high order, and the Bishop Auckland branch of the I.L.P. had few propagandists whose labours in "the cause" were as fruitful as those of this middle-class apostle of working-class liberty. It became plain that this was an advocate worthy to plead the cause of the people in the great councils of the nation.

The War, which interrupted this career, did not, as in some unhappy instances, shatter any of the ideals by which it was guided. Ben Spoor was by conviction a Pacifist, but he was not so bound to the abstract idea of pacifism as to think it imperative to refuse his services when he believed they could be devoted to the real service of his fellow-men. He was commissioned by the Y.M.C.A., a body with which he had old associations in connection with their educational work, to organise their centres in Salonika, a zone in which the ministrations of voluntary "welfare" organisations were particularly badly needed.

Salonika furnished one of the most dismal and instructive episodes of the War. Every conceivable form of human misery, all the sufferings incidental to battle, famine, and disease were concentrated in its narrow streets and crowded into the surrounding territory. Reason had taught Spoor to detest war; experience confirmed that detestation. He came

back to England fired with new zeal for the cause of international pacifism.

During his absence his name had remained before the I.L.P. in Bishop Auckland as that of their prospective Parliamentary Candidate—he had been adopted in 1914, immediately prior to the outbreak of war—and in the general election of 1918, in a triangular fight, he beat a Coalition Liberal and a “Wee Free,” with a poll which allowed him a margin over the combined vote given to his opponents. At the elections of 1922, 1923, and 1924 the electors confirmed their verdict by handsome majorities, and there are few seats in the House of Commons to-day held by a safer tenure.

His eloquence, largely founded on a wide and deep knowledge of his topic, and his grasp of routine, rapidly established him as a Parliamentarian of the front rank, and gained him another mark of recognition from the rank and file of the Labour Movement, who in 1919 elected him to a seat on the executive of the National Party. Two years later he was appointed Secretary of the National Peace Council, to the work of which organisation he had devoted a great part of his leisure.

Labour has always been very largely a party of specialists, and the member for Bishop Auckland was not the least among them in point of those qualifications which entitle their possessor to speak with the authority of an expert. The two great dependencies of India and Egypt, the source of the thorniest of the problems with which Imperialists are eternally vexed, had been for years the objects of his closest study. All that could be known of Indian and Egyptian affairs from official and unofficial publications he had painstakingly gained. When the struggling Labour Movement in India claimed the aid of their British comrades Spoor was chosen as a fraternal delegate to attend the congress convened, at a critical juncture, in that country. Nobody could have been better fitted to fulfil a task to which tact, no less than knowledge, was primarily essential. Nobody could have been trusted to bring a more accurate report of a position, a precise understanding of which was of the first importance to the party in this country.

Late in 1922 the Coalition Government collapsed, and its debris was swept away in the ensuing elections. Labour found itself for the first time the Official Opposition against a Conservative Government. Against the heavy gains accruing to Labour, which had doubled its representation, were some inevitable but not less regrettable losses; among others

Mr. Arthur Henderson, an ex-Cabinet Minister and the Labour Whip in the House of Commons, had been unseated at Widnes. It was necessary to appoint an Acting Chief Whip. Ben Spoor had but four years of Parliamentary experience behind him, but he was chosen unanimously, and during the short interim before Mr. Henderson's triumph at a by-election in Newcastle filled one of the most difficult of party appointments with conspicuous success.

With the release from official duties Ben Spoor was able to carry out a long-projected visit to Egypt, then in a state of suppressed revolt against a suzerainty only maintained by a parade of armed force. He saw at once what it took the Foreign Office of the time a good many months to see; that an essential condition to peace and stability was the return from his Gibraltar captivity of Zaghlul Pasha, who to his countrymen was the embodiment of their hopes of full nationhood. His letters and telegrams to the Labour Party stressing the urgency of this step were widely published in the Press, and were an important means of informing public opinion in this country on a topic which officialdom was extremely slow to discuss.

Incidentally his return from Egypt is dated by an appalling aeronautic calamity; a cross-Channel plane, on which he would have been a passenger but for the lateness of a train, "crashed," every soul on board being killed.

In 1923 the stop-gap Conservative administration, after ten months of empty meditation on the increasingly urgent domestic and other problems of the day, appealed to the country, and lost a hundred seats. Labour increased its Parliamentary representation to nearly 200, and, on the defeat of the Conservatives in the Commons, became the Government of the day. Mr. Henderson vacated the post of Chief Whip to go to the Home Office, and Ben Spoor, whose fitness to succeed him had never been questioned, and had already been proved, stepped into his shoes.

A Whip has at all times a thankless task; his path is beset with double toil and trouble when, as in this case, he is the house steward of a minority Government holding office by a precarious tenure. Tact and an indomitable zeal enabled Ben Spoor to prevail against every handicap; a hard-driven rank and file were able throughout, in the midst of their tribulations, to appreciate in the right sense the devoted attention of their chosen taskmaster.

The defeat of the Labour Government in the 1924 elections

did not lessen his responsibility ; certainly not his labours. The I.L.P. turned from the hustings with characteristic zeal and energy, to renew those missionary labours for which they have always evinced so marked an aptitude, and prominent upon their list of workers figured the name of Ben Spoor—now bearing the prefix Right Honourable, for in relinquishing office Mr. Ramsay MacDonald had used the privilege of an outgoing Premier to confer on him and on one other—William Graham, Financial Secretary to the Treasury—the rank of Privy Councillor.

Ben Spoor is still a young man, but he is a notable figure in a party which is, by all the portents, within a short distance of fulfilling its destiny. His practical sagacity, his steady temperament, and his capacity for work are pre-eminently vanguard qualities ; he is one of the men for whom to-morrow tarries.

MR. ROBERT SMILLIE, M.P.

THE VETERAN MINERS' LEADER

By ROBERT NICHOL, M.P.*

THE Labour Movement is double-channelled. The two currents run alongside, mingle at some points, diverge at others, but everywhere keep their identity. One of the streams is industrial, the other political; and it is possible to chronicle the actions and deeds of each separately. But in any such twofold history it would be found that many personalities would figure in both volumes. Of no one is this truer than of Robert Smillie. The chief activities of his life have been employed in building up and perfecting the organisation of the miners, first in Lanarkshire, then in Scotland, and finally in Great Britain; but from the earliest days he has thrown himself body and soul into the improvement of social conditions by political means. This parallelism in the movement accounts for the difference in two careers starting off from the same point in the Lanarkshire pits and maintaining lifelong affinity. Keir Hardie at an early stage was practically driven from active work in the mines by the pit manager, who stopped the cage one morning when Hardie was descending to his work and drove him off the premises with the exclamation, "We'll hae nane o' thae d——d Hardies in oor pits." Robert Smillie continued for many years in the pits, although his equally strong expression of opinions, none too popular with the employers, caused him to move from pit to pit and sometimes barred him from all. Incidentally the incessant change gave to him that acquaintance with every phase of mining which stood him in good stead so often subsequently when he became the spokesman of the miners.

The greatest "Scotsman" in the Trade-Union world was born in Ireland. Robert Smillie was born in Belfast on

* The Author of this biographical sketch died whilst the work was passing through the press.

17th March, 1857, and did not come to Scotland until he was fifteen years of age. In spite of his birthplace, Mr. Smillie can rightly claim a Scottish connection, since his family were among those Southern Scots who at an earlier period had crossed to Ireland. Losing both his parents at an early age, the future leader began to work as an errand-boy when nine years of age. His entire education in the more formal sense was compressed into a few months' attendance at an infant school in Belfast, supplemented when eleven and a half years of age by part-time attendance at school when employed as a half-timer in a Belfast spinning-mill. Even that ceased when he was twelve, and he became a full-time worker at the mill. His "alma mater" was primarily the grim school of experience—not a very kindly mother—that world of men and things which has so powerfully shaped the careers of working-class leaders.

There has always been a close connection between Belfast and Glasgow, and in 1872 we find Robert Smillie and his elder brother at work in the West of Scotland. For two years "Bob" was employed in various workshops on the Clyde, mainly as a plater's helper or hammerman. The turning-point in his career came when, as a lad of seventeen, attracted by the promise of steady work and good wages—these were the days of the miners' big wage of 10s. a day—went to work as a pumpman in a Lanarkshire pit, and first settled down in the village of Larkhall, which ever since has remained his home.

When Mr. Smillie entered the mines in 1874, conditions had vastly improved compared with those which had existed even within the lifetime of workers then living. The memory of the Scot is long. To-day elections in the North are fought and won on the question of the Highland clearances of over a century ago. Even the plain recital from a history book of these evictions and burnings makes the blood of the native Scot boil and his temper rise. The House of Commons feels taken aback when into a discussion on Scottish affairs there bursts an angry storm about these century-old happenings. But they are the very warp and woof of Scottish life and politics, reacting on the minds of the people and forming the basis of political conviction. Much more so, then, the living memory that existed in the early seventies of the evil conditions under which the coal-pits had been worked. Boys and girls who to-day would be attending an infant school,

were then literally yoked to drag the coal-tubs from the working face to the pit bottom. One quotation from the report of Lord Ashley's Commission will give an impression of the conditions :

"The girls are of all ages from seven to twenty-one and commonly work quite naked to the waist, and are dressed—so far as they are dressed at all—in loose trousers. These are seldom whole in either sex. In many of the collieries the adult colliers, whom these girls serve, work perfectly naked. Any sight more disgustingly indecent or revolting than these girls at work can scarcely be imagined."

The child-slavery which had made the pits so notorious had been abolished so far as girls were concerned and curtailed in respect to the age for boys. The workers were no longer chattels bought and sold with the mine. Yet much remained to be done to ensure a minimum standard of life and housing among colliers. General economic conditions were sometimes on the side of, but oftener against, the mine workers. The heavy demand for coal occasioned by the unsettled conditions on the Continent due to the Franco-German War had caused wages to rise and placed the miner in a relatively good position, but in Scotland the years of prosperity were not utilised for rebuilding the Unions of the miners. The memory of former organisations still remained, as well as many who had been actively engaged in them.

In 1860 Alexander MacDonald had succeeded in having incorporated in the Mines Act a "check-weigher" clause, empowering a majority of miners in any pit to appoint one of their members to scrutinise the owner's weigher at his work at the pit-head. The next twenty years saw a continual struggle on the part of the men to enforce this simple guarantee of "just weighing," and on the part of the pit owners to evade the provisions of the Act. In Parliament the friends of the owners had amended the clause so as to confine the choice to persons actually employed in the particular pit. The owners, in most cases where a "check-weigher" was appointed, promptly dismissed the appointed person, and in others so barricaded the weighing machines that no effective check could be made of the actual weighing. Robert Smillie, who was elected a check-weighman himself, had first-hand knowledge of the fight for "just weighing," and points out how strongly he felt on the matter.

“In this apparently trivial issue the keen observer may see all the symptoms of the disease which cripples industry to-day. It seems strange that any body of employers could take exception to such a reasonable request; but they did. It seems stranger that they should have sought and found other and more subtle means of beating the men when they were themselves beaten; but they did. And, in either case, the men were helpless. Their only weapon was the strike, and the strike strikes the striker much harder than it strikes anybody else.”¹

The period of high wages was followed by a depression in trade when wages fell to 2s. and even 1s. 8d. per day. In the attempt to resist these reductions several disastrous local strikes took place and the Lanarkshire County Union collapsed. The general Trade-Union *débâcle* was intensified in the West of Scotland by the failure of the City of Glasgow Bank in 1879. In August 1880 the deepening discontent led to a strike which lasted over six weeks and which was general throughout Lanarkshire. This was the “Tattie Strike,” so called because the chief strike benefit took the form of a ration of potatoes. In its immediate object the strike failed, but it showed the miners that if they were to achieve a reasonable standard of life they would require to organise themselves and accumulate funds.

The apathy and demoralisation continued till 1885, when a mass meeting at Motherwell decided to reform their local Union with a demand for the reinstitution of the five-day week—Thursday had been formerly an idle day—and sent out strong pickets to the surrounding districts. One of these pickets came to Larkhall, and at a meeting held at Bryce’s Green, Robert Smillie made his debut as a public speaker and was also appointed secretary of the Larkhall Miners’ Association. One of the first results was the new association’s stand against the acceptance of the owners’ terms in a county strike. Larkhall followed the new secretary’s lead in maintaining for the men the mid-week holiday, and instead of a sliding scale an advance of sixpence per day in wages. This local success marked the beginning of Robert Smillie’s career as a miners’ leader and as a public representative. By this time he had arrived at the conclusion, to quote his own words :

¹ *My Life for Labour*, by Robert Smillie, M.P.

"That the workers were the wealth producers, and that it was the failure of our industrial system to distribute the wealth produced equitably which caused the tremendous inequalities of our social system and the consequent class cleavage and bitterness. I was hot-blooded and warm-hearted—not always the same thing—and the spectacle, ever present before my eyes, of certain types of employers of labour grinding their workers to the extreme limit of existence and feeling no compunction in so doing, whilst they themselves lived in luxury, stirred my compassion for the one and my fierce resentment against the other. Out of such a combination anything may come. It made me a Labour leader."

His conception of the organisation necessary to achieve the permanent betterment of conditions had become clear. The Union at Larkhall had to link itself with the other local Unions to form one organised body co-extensive with the Lanarkshire coal-field. In turn this had to federate itself with similar Unions in the other districts of Scotland. Beyond lay the question of joining up with the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, and farther afield still the question of combining into a Miners' International with the coal-fields of Europe as its sphere of action. Mr. Smillie's career was to march steadily forward until this dream was in large measure to be realised.

In 1888 we find him, accompanied by William Small, attending the All-British Miners' Conference at Birmingham. This conference was called by the National Union of Miners, founded by Alexander MacDonald. It was presided over by Mr. Thomas Burt, M.P., and here the young Lanarkshire miner, coming into contact with the veterans of the miners' movement, was enabled to take that wider view of national problems and to see what had been achieved in other districts. The great controversy within the Miners' Unions was one which caused a cleavage throughout the whole Trade-Union world—the question of the legal enactment of an eight-hours day. As the matter stood there was no legal limitation of adult men's hours in existence. MacDonald had concentrated in obtaining a ten-hours day for boys, knowing that this would, in the economy of mining, also limit the men to a ten-hours day.

The work of an organising secretary in its early stages was no easy job. To-day the use of motor-cars overcomes some

of the physical hardships. Forty years ago the distance between headquarters and the outlying pits had to be covered on foot, so that on many an occasion the work entailed a walk of seven or ten miles. The normal time for many of the meetings was when the early-morning shift of men were on their way to work, so that the young secretary had to start from home about four-thirty or five even when the pit was near at hand. For a number of years Mr. Smillie carried on his secretarial work in addition to his work as a collier. Only a superabundant supply of energy and enthusiasm could have kept him going. Working ten hours per day in the pit, his evenings and mid-week holiday were occupied with committee and district meetings, while both Saturday afternoon and Sunday saw him busy with the necessary clerical work. His secretarial fee was 15s. per quarter, or £3 per annum. Such assuredly was not the road to wealth! Such service given steadily and honestly for years was to endear him to his fellow-workmen and to disprove the old proverb that "a prophet hath honour save in his own country." No man is better known or more universally admired and respected in his own town than Robert Smillie.

The first political body to which Mr. Smillie was elected was the Larkhall School Board, of which he was a member for twelve years. One of the anomalies of public education was that while the School Board provided the expensive items in education, the school grounds and buildings and the teachers, the provision of school books was left to the parents of the children. The result was that almost a month was lost at the beginning of each session before every child was provided with the necessary books, and when wages were abnormally low, it was often an impossible task for the parents of a large family to provide the books at all. Several elections in Larkhall were fought on this subject, and after six years' advocacy Mr. Smillie carried his point and this School Board was one of the first to adopt the policy of free books.

In the larger field of national politics the Mid Lanark Division, in which Larkhall is situated, was to be the ground of a pioneer fight. Considerable dissatisfaction existed about the representation of the working-classes in Parliament. The earliest "Labour members," including Alexander MacDonald and Thomas Burt, had been elected as Liberal members, and on many occasions found it an impossible task to get the leaders of that party to carry out the reforms demanded by

the Trade-Union forces. Working-class issues remained subordinate to the party claims, and the growing discontent in the industrial districts demanded independent Labour representatives in the House of Commons. As a result Keir Hardie was nominated in 1888 as a candidate in the Mid Lanark Division, with his friend Mr. Smillie as one of his chief supporters; but some years later, when Keir Hardie had been elected as member for West Ham, he returned to support Robert Smillie in his first contest for the representation of the Mid Lanark Division. This was the first of seven contests which the present member for Morpeth undertook as a Labour candidate.

The Liberal opposition to these independent Labour candidates was of the most strenuous character, and on several occasions Mr. Smillie might have won a seat by accepting the Liberal conditions, which were that he and his friends should stand down in other constituencies and so avoid three-cornered contests. That was the old policy. Under it no Labour Party could ever have come into existence as an effective force in politics, let alone have achieved the reins of government. The discontent was not a local phenomenon, and when a conference was called in 1893 in Bradford to form an independent party—delegates were present from all the industrial districts of Britain—the Independent Labour Party was brought into being. Mr. Smillie was one of the founders, as also he had been a member of its earlier forerunner—the Scottish Labour Party. The I.L.P.—as the new party was called—had a definitely Socialist basis and at once set about organising its forces. As a result we find Mr. Smillie's second Parliamentary contest was in the Camlachie Division of Glasgow. In this election six seats in Glasgow and Govan were contested, all unsuccessfully. Labour's triumph in Glasgow was to come only after another twenty-eight years' steady work of education and propaganda in the new principles.

In the nineties the new party made slow but steady progress. In the Jingo election of 1899 Mr. Smillie was the Labour candidate in North-east Lanark. His view on the war was direct and unequivocal. In Motherwell a town-hall meeting howled him down for a time. For twenty minutes nothing could be heard but hoots and hisses. Tired out at last, they listened to the candidate's views on the land, housing, and labour conditions. "Now," said the speaker, "you can get your bricks ready. I am going to deal with the war." He

told them that it was a war "engineered by the capitalist and money classes. It would not have taken place if there had been no gold in the Transvaal."

A somewhat different reception was met at another district in the same contest. Religious differences cut across the political field. After being asked his views on the war, the candidate was heckled on the question of Home Rule for Ireland. On hearing that Mr. Smillie was in favour of Home Rule for Ireland, the heckler turned to the audience and declared: "As a miners' agent Bob is a' richt, but as a politician he's not worth a d——! I don't know whether he should be hanged or drowned, but I think that the best thing we can do is just to walk out and leave him." The meeting immediately trooped out, leaving Mr. Smillie and the chairman with only one supporter.

In 1906 Paisley was the battle-ground where Mr. Smillie kept the flag of the I.L.P. flying in another unsuccessful attempt. Elsewhere in the country the Labour Party was more successful, and the new Parliament saw it in its first youthful strength as a combination of independent Trade-Union and I.L.P. members. A by-election at Cockermouth later in the same year was also contested by the Scottish miners' leader. Two further attempts in Mid Lanark during the General Elections of 1910 completed his seven unsuccessful attempts to enter Parliament. The ground broken and sown in these many contests was to bear its harvest a little later. All the constituencies which saw Mr. Smillie's pioneer fights have been captured and are held by Labour members. Mr. Smillie's claim to be the "champion defeated candidate" for Parliamentary honours is but a mark of his willing eagerness to fight what appears at the time to be a hopeless fight, but which is in reality laying the foundations of future victory. Only by such faith are great movements made possible.

The most outstanding and notable phase in his career, however, was only indirectly political, and it was as a great industrial leader that he came into contact with Governments and political leaders. The first ten years of the century saw a steady development of the miners' organisation, culminating early in 1912 with the demand for an individual minimum wage. The contending parties were the mine-owners on the one hand and the Miners' Federation of Great Britain on the other. A deadlock in negotiations was reached and a general strike throughout all the coal-fields commenced simultane-

ously. In previous strikes one area had been played off against another and a supply of coal was obtainable. This, however, was an effective national stoppage. In a few days the export of coal stopped; in a few weeks industry generally had to slow down, as its supply of stored coal came to an end. The equipment of every mine in the country was intact—there was no destruction—but without the human labour not a ton of coal could be obtained.

The object of the strike was to ensure a definite minimum wage for the mine workers. While it was true that in most of the coal-fields wages were regulated by agreement, in thousands of individual cases miners working on tonnage rates, although working just as hard and skilfully as their fellows, were able to earn only two or three shillings per day. While miners in good places were making relatively high wages, others in "abnormal places" were working, through no fault of their own, for a mere pittance. The demand of the men was that in cases where a man through no fault of his own, but owing to the exigencies of the situation, was unable to make a fair wage on the piece-work rate, the employer should be bound to make up his wages to a recognised minimum.

Mr. Smillie was vice-chairman of the Miners' Federation, the chairman, Mr. Enoch Edwards, M.P. The strike lasted for six weeks, and was concluded by the enactment by the Asquith Government of the Coal-Mines (Minimum Wage) Act, which admitted the principle involved, but failed to state the actual figures demanded by the men, 5s. per day for a man and 2s. for a boy. Under the Act minimum wages were fixed in each of the coal-fields by arbitrators. The first great national strike thus ended in a substantial although not complete victory for the men. The responsibilities resting on the shoulders of the leaders were great. Practically the whole Press condemned their actions, but they remained faithful to their task. Their headquarters during the negotiations in London were far removed from any of the coal-fields, but the trust placed in them by their fellows was fully justified, and Mr. Smillie emerged from the ordeal with his reputation for directness and honesty of purpose as well as for far-sightedness greatly enhanced. Within a few years he was chosen as President of the Federation and leader of the miners in their future struggles.

The outbreak of war in August 1914 proved a testing-time for all working-class leaders. The Labour Movement as a

whole was strongly in favour of maintaining peace, but recognised the danger of the armed camp into which Europe had been converted by the opposing militarist elements in the Balance of Power. For two years Mr. Smillie had been pointing out the dangers from I.L.P. platforms throughout the country. In his opinion, the War was the outcome of the commercial and imperialist rivalries of the nations, and was only inevitable in so far as these could not under a capitalist regime be reconciled with the general welfare of the peoples concerned. The only hope for preventing war lay in the international organisations of the working-classes and in the application of those weapons, especially the power of ceasing work, which had proved useful and advantageous within the nations themselves. Europe, however, was not at this stage, and with the incident of Sarajevo to provide the spark the whole powder-magazine exploded.

During the War Mr. Smillie's views did not change; the only hope of the common peoples lay in an early and durable peace, but that common trait of war-time feeling, the spirit of intolerance, found no part in his spirit or in his conduct. In no way is this better illustrated than in the fact that two of his sons became officers in the Army, while one of his other sons went to prison as a conscientious objector. Their father's views were well known, but he did not attempt to influence his sons one way or the other. Only on such a basis of mutual respect were the happy family reunions possible at the old home at 29 Miller Street, Larkhall. Mr. Smillie was no believer in the doctrine that people should cease to think or to express their thoughts during war-time, and scored one outstanding point in favour of free speech by appearing at the Central Halls in Glasgow and reading a lecture which had been written by Mr. Bertrand Russell. Under D.O.R.A. Mr. Russell had been forbidden to visit Glasgow.

In the first wave of war feeling many things were done which later had to be undone. One of these was the wholesale enlistment of miners. In the first six months almost 200,000 enlisted, and as a result the output of coal from the pits decreased to an alarming extent. In the work of reorganisation Mr. Smillie took a prominent part, all the time maintaining that the men best fitted to control the industry were those actively engaged in it. He did not believe it was a wise policy on the part of the Trade Unions to scrap all the safeguards and conditions which experience had shown to be

necessary for the smooth and efficient working of the industrial machine. In particular he strongly opposed the inclusion of the miners in the provisions of the Munitions Acts as being quite unnecessary to the proper working of the pits. Only after a serious stoppage in the South Wales coal-field would the Government admit that the attempt to include the miners by King's Proclamation was likely to lead to grave trouble all over the country. One result of his strong stand was the recognition of the wisdom of his point of view by Trade Unionists of all crafts, so that in the closing years of the War and those which immediately followed he was undoubtedly the most popular and most trusted working-class leader in the country.

In 1917, when Mr. Lloyd George was Prime Minister, an attempt was made to enlist Mr. Smillie's services as Food Controller. Several telegrams asking him to come to 10 Downing Street had been received at his home in Larkhall. Mrs. Smillie, he relates, had become somewhat suspicious. "What does the Prime Minister want with you?" she said. "It evidently means the gaol or a job," he replied. "Well," she said very seriously, "if it's the gaol, that'll be a' richt; but if it's a job, and you agree to tak' it, you micht send us a telegram and we'll a' be oot o' here when you come back."¹

Mrs. Smillie evidently thought that the desire to get "Bob" into a job was made with the intention of shutting off his activities as a leader of the miners. Mr. Smillie refused the Controllership, first because he felt that his life's work lay with the miners, but also because the Government were not prepared to give the Controller the powers of "pit and gallows" necessary, in his opinion, to deal with the food profiteering that was going on. Time was to prove his decision a right one. There were many others who could carry out the work of Food Controlling, but none to fill the unique position he had achieved in the miners' movement.

The aftermath of the War was to prove as bitter a trial almost as the War itself. Great changes had taken place in the outlook of the world. Men and women were demanding the fulfilment of the perhaps too grandiose promises that had been made in war-time speeches. "A world fit for heroes" was a phrase which had many reverberations throughout the land. Among others, the miners saw the steady rise in prices and demanded not only compensating rises in wages, but were

¹ *My Life for Labour*, by Robert Smillie, M.P.

also clamouring for an effective share in the control of the conditions under which they worked and an improvement of the horrible housing conditions in which thousands of them were forced to live. In 1919 a climax was reached, and notices were handed in for a general strike in all the coal-fields. This was supported by the other two members of the Triple Alliance, the 'Transport Workers' Federation and the National Union of Railwaymen. The Coalition Government asked that these strike notices should be suspended while an inquiry was being held into the whole conditions of the mining industry. The Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, promised that if this was agreed to, the Cabinet would abide by and act upon the recommendations of the Commission.

The outcome was the famous Coal Commission of 1919. The Commission consisted of three members of the Miners' Federation and three outside experts nominated by them; the remaining six in the same way represented the mine-owners of Great Britain, while the impartial chairman agreed upon by both sides was Mr. Justice Sankey. The sittings took place in the Royal Robing-room in the House of Lords, and were of such general interest and importance as to displace the reports of Parliament itself in the Press. The revelations of the first witness examined disclosed the profiteering during the War and caused a revulsion of public feeling in favour of the miners. Not only had swollen profits been wrung out of low wages to the miner combined with high prices to the consumer, but there was revealed a great amount of waste and inefficiency due to private ownership of the mines.

During the inquiry the cross-examination of the witnesses by Mr. Smillie and his colleagues demonstrated their intimate knowledge of the whole industry and also of the public questions involved. In no phase of his career did Mr. Smillie's outstanding qualities of simplicity of outlook and human feeling stand out more clearly. A great technical expert furnished with expert answers to the most complicated questions was asked to forget his technical knowledge for a moment and answer some simple questions as a man. One such question followed by another often enough swept into the background the carefully prepared reports and schemes of the opposition, and left in all its stark nakedness the overwhelming human case that Mr. Smillie put forward for those who had invested not their surplus wealth, but their very lives in the task of coal-getting for the nation. The often

unnecessary dangers incurred by the workers, their shocking housing conditions, and their low standard of life enforced on them were all put before the public in a way that evoked, outside the interests affected, an almost universal sympathy. The accusation has been made that Mr. Smillie browbeat the witnesses. No one present hearing the long series of questions put in a soft, rather husky voice, still, after fifty years' residence in Scotland, slightly reminiscent of his Irish origin, could maintain the accusation for a moment. The witnesses were often in difficulties not because Mr. Smillie was bullying them, but because he, with an inside knowledge of the whole trade, put his questions from a novel point of view: the human factor in industry came first, profits second. Mining disasters were things which affected the intimate home-life of his people, and not merely accidents which might be covered by an insurance company.

As the Commission proceeded it took the character rather of an open trial of private capitalism than of a cold inquiry into specific points of difference. No one was surprised when, with only a fraction of the evidence reviewed, the interim reports of the Commission not merely conceded in substance the men's immediate claims, but declared that "even upon the evidence already given the present system of ownership and working in the coal industry stands condemned." In open court Mr. Smillie saw the vindication of his fifty years' fight for industrial democracy.

But even when apparently achieving its ends, Labour has to face many set-backs. The Government pledge was not acted upon either "in the letter or in the spirit." Capitalism, menaced by the threat of nationalisation, rallied its forces through the Chambers of Commerce, the House of Commons, and the Press, and to-day we find the coal owners still entrenched in powerful positions and supported by the land and royalty owners.

A period of bad health and failing eyesight followed the strenuous months of the Commission, and resulted in the resignation of Mr. Smillie from the Presidency of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, although he still retained his chairmanship of the Scottish Miners and took a very considerable part in the work of the Labour Party.

In spite of many offers of "safe" seats, he refused to participate in the 1922 General Election as a candidate; but in June 1923 a unanimous invitation was extended to him

to fight the by-election in the Morpeth Division of Northumberland. Even at this stage the hostility invoked by his work for Labour and Socialism was strong enough to make the Conservatives combine with the Liberal opposition in a last attempt to defeat the veteran. Such was not the result, however. In his first straight fight with the combined forces of Capitalism Mr. Smillie came out at the top of the poll and took his seat in Parliament. The subsequent election in November saw him returned with an increased majority.

The decision made after the election that Labour with less than 200 supporters in a House of 615 members was to take over the government of the country was a course of action which he viewed with some misgiving, but the decision having been made, it has had his fullest support. Although offered a position in the Ministry, he felt that his energies would be best directed from outside the actual Government, and he was unanimously chosen as the Chairman of the Party Executive in the House of Commons. This position had been held by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald during the previous year; and as the Executive forms the chief link between the Labour Government and its supporters, the work has proved as strenuous as it is vital to the life of the Movement.

The chief note in Mr. Smillie's speeches in the House of Commons is his appeal to the human aspect of every situation which arises. For him the man and woman, but more especially the children, form the real wealth of the nation. Every system of society—Landlordism, Capitalism, Socialism—is judged by its attempts to bring a greater measure of happiness into the homes of the common people. "Bob," as he is affectionately styled by those of us much younger than himself, is aggressively class-conscious in the sense that he remains one of the people himself, asking nothing more from society than he would like everyone else to enjoy, and believing that if, as a nation, we set ourselves to the task, Great Britain is capable of giving to each and all of her sons and daughters a meed of health and happiness which would transfigure the world.

MR. WILL THORNE, M.P.

MOVEMENTS which are based on principle usually find themselves, in every phase of their development, richly endowed with personalities. The history of the Labour Movement, though primarily the narrative of the victorious progress of high social and political ideals, is none the less plentifully illustrated with those epics of the individual without which even history would be largely wanting as a medium of enlightenment. From among the veterans of the Movement, in particular, can be culled biographies which might well serve as parables for the inspiration of the pioneers of to-day, so accurately do they exhibit the vital significance of the struggles of the past.

The life story of Will Thorne is a complete example of this kind of biographical parable. This sturdy specimen of the heroic days of the Labour Movement has spent nearly half a century in the service of his fellow-men, and the complete record of his activities during those five decades is valuable as a revelation of the material, mental, and moral experiences in which modern working-class politics find their essential ingredients. During that fifty years the Movement has assimilated freely from the philosophies presented to it by the schools spoken of generically—sometimes in a tone removed from compliment—as “intellectual”; that it has at the same time retained an active memory of its beginnings is due almost wholly to the influence and character of men like the subject of the present sketch.

William James Thorne was born in 1857 in a working-class suburb of Birmingham, a city which at that time enjoyed a political reputation, earned in its Chartist days, closely similar to that assigned to Glasgow to-day. Radicalism, however, was little more than a leaven in the social life of the community seventy years ago, and there was no law to protect little Will Thorne from commercial exploitation before

he was well out of babyhood. He was not seven when, to increase the scanty family income, he went to work in a rope-walk, his task being to turn the wheel for a spinner. At the age of eight he found employment in a brickfield, and five years later—at the time when the late Joseph Chamberlain, then Mayor of Birmingham, was so terrifying orthodox politicians with his subversive views as to be dubbed Anti-Christ by middle-class journals—he became a worker in the Birmingham Municipal Gasworks, at Saltley. Here, except for a brief interval in 1872, when he worked at a metal rolling mill, he remained till, with the coming of manhood, he achieved the status of a full-time labourer, with the right to work twelve hours a day for a little over 20s. a week. The conditions were on a par with hours and wages, and the rank and file generally were oppressed with a sense of grievances which they saw no way of redressing.

Young Thorne, who had contrived in his scanty leisure to pick up the essentials of an education, and had begun a pretty extensive course of reading, bethought him of a weapon which, properly wielded, could not fail to achieve something towards the emancipation of his fellow-workers. He began to preach the need for organisation, with a zeal undamped by the frowns of the employing authority, or the indifference, suspicion—sometimes even the open hostility—of the men. It was, perhaps, much to expect of men whose lives were so widely overshadowed by long dull hours of toil, that they should give up any of the little time they could call their own to preparations for a struggle which few of them had the spirit even to contemplate.

Thorne none the less worked on doggedly, with an optimism that mounted above every obstacle. In 1880 the Saltley Gasworkers had an object-lesson calculated to bring home to them the realities of their position in the organisation of industry. The management introduced an invention designed to speed up the charging of the retorts, and entitled to the term labour-saving to this extent: that it enabled two men, by working as hard as four men, to do four men's work. Exulting in the peculiar efficiency of this device, the Corporation shortened the staff of labourers by 50 per cent., perfectly satisfied, no doubt, with the righteousness of a proceeding which effected so much in the cause of plain £.s.d. economy.

The surviving staff endured the company of the "Iron Man," as the new contraption was romantically termed, until

Nature, which had fashioned them of less accommodating material, insisted on revolt. Young Thorne, though no shirker—he had that appetite for hard physical work which belongs to vigorous constitutions—found the strain unendurable, and was forward in remonstrance. When redress was refused the men walked out.

The nettled management filled their places without much difficulty, and the affair, which one could hardly call a strike, was over. Young Thorne had another illustration at first hand for his homilies on the need for working-class unity and organisation.

As a married man—in the previous year he had espoused Miss Mary Hallam, daughter of a well-known Birmingham Radical—a job of some sort was a necessity, and he was not long in finding employment on a drainage scheme, at 5*d.* per hour. The completion of the contract left him once more on the labour market, and the prospects of employment in Birmingham, as throughout the industrial Midlands generally, at that period, were so bad that he decided to test his fortunes in London, an idea suggested by the letters of a former workmate, who had already been established for some time in the metropolis. Funds were low, and Thorne and a comrade who had decided to join him in his venture made the 100-mile journey by Shanks' pony. The correspondent, tracked down with some difficulty, found them work at the South Metropolitan Gasworks, and Thorne felt sufficiently secure of the immediate future to send for his wife and child, for whom he took a tiny room in Somers Town. With the coming of summer, however, the company shortened staff, and Thorne returned to Saltley, once more finding employment at the Municipal Gasworks. Another attempt at "labour-saving" led to another walk-out strike, and Thorne, turning his back on the Midlands for the second time, trudged off doggedly to London, obtaining work this time at the Beckton Gasworks, at 5*s.* 4*d.* a day. His wife and children joined him, and he settled down in Canning Town with the fixed determination that this should be the end of his wanderings. These years of adversity had wrought of the hard stuff that was in him a promising rebel against the system by which he and his fellow-workers were so unfairly treated. His hopes and ambitions were strengthened by the movements which he saw going on about him, and were given a definite form by the teachings of the Social Democratic Federation. The S.D.F. at that time

led the vanguard in the march towards industrial emancipation, and was particularly forward in urging the workers everywhere to "unionise." Just what the difficulties were, however, is illustrated by the fate of "Julian's Union," a short-lived association of gasworkers formed in 1884 by Jack Monks, one of Thorne's associates, who from motives of policy dictated by the vengeful vigilance of the employers, was forced to hide his identity under the *nom-de-guerre* of "Julian." Lack of support from the mass of the workers, who were timid of these "revolutionary" innovations, was responsible for the failure of "Julian's Union" to attain any real or active existence. Another attempt in the following year proved no less abortive for the same reasons, and Thorne, stimulated by his disappointment, threw himself but the more energetically into the work of the S.D.F.

His work in this connection brought him into contact with personalities who have not yet ceased to influence the political thought of the masses, among them Charles Bradlaugh, Annie Besant, Tom Mann, and George Bernard Shaw. It was as chairman of the meetings called to receive the messages of these apostolic propagandists that Thorne himself first mastered the essentials of public oratory.

In 1885 the S.D.F. won a victory which, in a sense, has served them as a justification for their separate existence ever since. Their activities, and the success they met with, had brought them under the notice of the authorities, who in 1885 were in a state of mind difficult to diagnose in view of the fact that there were still ten years to go before the appearance of halfpenny dailies. Plain-clothes, plain-thinking policemen swarmed at street corners, and a couple of the fraternity so scarified a London magistrate with their report of a speech by Jack Williams at a meeting held in defiance of a police ban that the orator got a month's imprisonment, as a warning to him not to harass the mind of Scotland Yard. That was in August. In September the police, having vindicated the respectability of the official mind, withdrew their ban. On 27th September a gathering of 50,000 workers celebrated their victory at the East India Docks. One of the leading orators was Will Thorne, whose work as secretary of the Canning Town branch of the S.D.F. was fast winning the confidence of his workmates for the carefully formulated schemes which he was so forward in advocating. The rising leader—for he had by now earned that title—was sharply

tested early in the following year, when acute distress, arising out of widespread unemployment, provoked the patience of a working-class not generally notorious for social impatience. A mass demonstration was planned to take place in Trafalgar Square on 8th February and it fell to Thorne to lead the Canning Town contingent. Strong forces of police, drawn up four deep, awaited the eastern columns at the junction of Wellington Street and the Strand; as soon as the marchers appeared they were attacked without warning by the guardians of law and order. Thorne was among the casualties, but he succeeded in rallying his followers, practically the whole of whom, though at first dispersed by the onset of the police, made their way by devious ways to Trafalgar Square. The police by this time were on their mettle; the demonstrators were dispersed by repeated charges which qualified scores for beds in the nearest hospitals and three of the speakers, John Burns, H. H. Champion, and H. M. Hyndman, were arrested. They were not brought to trial until two months later, when their acquittal gave notice to the authorities of the important changes in public opinion which the times were bringing.

In 1889 Thorne saw his earliest and best cherished ambition realised, in the foundation of the National Union of Gas Workers and General Labourers, of which he was the first General Secretary, an appointment he still holds. For the next few years he was occupied in the intricate and arduous task of organisation, his leisure being devoted to strenuous propaganda in the cause of political labour. In 1890 he won a seat on West Ham Town Council, and as a member of that body—on which he has served ever since—gained valuable experience in the working of the mechanism of government. In 1894 he became a member of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, and six years later he fought his first Parliamentary election as candidate for West Ham, when he sustained his first and last defeat. At the General Election of 1906 the electorate of West Ham took the opportunity to make amends, and he entered Parliament as one of a small but notable band of working-class representatives.

In 1912 he became President of the Trades Union Congress, and in the autumn of 1913 attended the Canadian Congress at Montreal as delegate from the British Movement, being the first representative of Trade Unionism in this country to visit Canada on an official mission.

Will Thorne himself appeared on recruiting platforms, but his activities were mainly devoted to the safeguarding of the interests of the citizen-soldiers against the encroachments of reactionaries. His rebuke to Lloyd George, at a May Day meeting in Nottingham in 1915, when he vigorously repudiated charges brought by the Liberal leader against the patriotism of the workers, was an indication that war enthusiasm had not obscured his clear political vision where the interests of the masses were concerned, while hundreds of thousands of returned soldiers and widows of war victims remember with gratitude the unflinching stand he took in pressing the claim for a minimum war pension of £1 a week.

With the conclusion of war the Trade-Union Movement entered upon a new and portentous phase of evolution. Ideas of the essential unity of the working-classes began to prevail, and it became a matter of universal discussion among Trade Unionists as to how that unity could best be given effect in terms of structural organisation. Nobody but a few visionaries retained any glimmerings of faith in the practicability of the "One Big Union" ideal, but the shrewder heads of the Movement did discern that the times were ripe for the inauguration of processes tending towards the creation of new and more formidable Trade-Union identities.

In 1918 the National Union of Gas Workers and General Labourers had undergone a transformation from which it emerged as the National Union of General Workers, catering extensively for every class of unskilled worker, and from this basis Thorne began to work towards amalgamation with the two other bodies operating in the same industrial field; the National Amalgamated Union of Labour, and the Municipal Employees' Association. Negotiations, necessarily protracted by the numerous major and minor adjustments inevitable in such a scheme, were complicated by difficulties arising out of a proposal to comprehend in the amalgamation the Workers' Union, with its 200,000 membership. This proposal did not become effective, though in the task of explanation of its possibilities there was a valuable exchange of views and experiences, and the negotiators addressed themselves anew to the less ambitious scheme. This was finally carried through in 1924, and the new National Union of General and Municipal Workers began its career with a membership of 500,000 and reserve funds amounting to £500,000. Its constituent bodies have a history with which are associated such notable names

as the Right Hon. J. H. Clynes, M.P., Arthur Hayday, M.P., W. Girling, Ralph Spence, P. J. Tevenan, Ben Gardner, M.P.,¹ the late Pete Curran, and the late T. N. Bell, and its influence and authority in the working-class union are undaunted and unchallengeable. That Will Thorne should have been chosen, where so many choices were open, to conduct the affairs of this important body is a testimony to the faith of the rank and file of the workers in the integrity, ability, and vigour of a champion, who though he has achieved the prestige of a veteran, has lost none of the energy and enthusiasm of a pioneer.

¹ Mr Gardner lost his seat in the 1924 Election.

RIGHT HON. JOHN HODGE

ONE OF LABOUR'S PIONEERS

ONE of the veterans of the Labour Movement, and a pioneer on both the industrial and political sides of its organisation, is the Rt. Hon. John Hodge, and it is a significant tribute to his loyal and devoted service that few Labour leaders to-day are held in higher esteem, even by the new generation which has not had the opportunity of witnessing his works during the last forty years.

He comes of Scottish stock—having been born at Muirhead in 1855—and embodies all the tenacious characteristics traditionally associated with his race; that these have stood him in good stead is proved by the fact that the union which he founded and organised has become one of the most efficient, progressive, and powerful in the country. It was at the age of thirty, whilst working in the blast furnaces of Motherwell, that he first associated himself with the Trade-Union Movement. Conditions of employment were none too good in those days. The working week was over seventy hours, the rate of wages barely on the subsistence level, and the employers, encouraged by the absence of any organisation, took every possible opportunity of forcing down the workmen's standard of living in order that their own profits might reap the advantage. Strikes by way of protest were ineffective until John Hodge and a few of his comrades embarked upon the task of uniting the steel smelters in a properly organised union. The Steel Smelters' Association was launched on 8th January, 1886, with Mr. Hodge as its General Secretary, and though the membership at first was only 66—confined to the Glasgow district—so well were his organising efforts rewarded that by the time of the first conference, two years later, it had grown to twelve times that number, with twenty branches spread throughout England, Scotland, and Wales. Since then, under his leadership, its record has been one of uninterrupted

progress, and when it merged into the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, in 1917, he was rewarded with the Presidency of the new alliance, having also in the meantime been President of the Trades Union Congress.

In the political sphere his activities have been no less effective. In Glasgow he took a very keen interest in social and municipal affairs, as also in Manchester, whence the headquarters of his organisation moved in 1892. There he became a member of the City Council, and subsequently he contested Gower in 1900 and Preston in 1903 as a Parliamentary Labour candidate. Though unsuccessful on these occasions, he won the Gorton constituency in 1906, and retained it continuously until 1923, when he retired from Parliament in order to devote his whole time to industrial matters.

As a Member of the House, his usefulness could never be measured by the multiplicity of his words. It was not his habit to speak on unnecessary occasions, nor to waste valuable time on useless flights of eloquence. Consequently, when he did consider it desirable to rise, his utterances were always assured of a ready audience. Thus it was he to whom was allotted the task of introducing the Labour Party's Right to Work Bill in 1909, and though on that occasion it was heavily defeated, the reason lay not in any weakness of his argument, but in the numerical constitution of the parties in the House.

At the outbreak of the War he was vice-chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and when the chairman (Mr. Arthur Henderson) was raised to Cabinet rank in the Coalition, he became the acting chairman, and continued in this position until he himself was appointed to office at the end of 1916. The Ministry of Labour, a State Department which the Labour Party had frequently advocated, was then established, with Mr. Hodge as the first Minister, and the status which it now possesses was only obtained as the result of the stand that he then adopted.

Later he became Minister of Pensions, in which capacity his usefulness was even more apparent. He quickly dispelled any idea that might have been inclined to regard pensions in the nature of a charitable and patronising concession instead of as a rightful reward for services rendered, and he gave special consideration to the claims of widows and dependent children. Moreover, he paid immediate attention to the need for establishing machinery for restarting disabled men in industrial life, and so convinced was he that they ought not

to be allowed to drift into blind-alley occupations that he set up a special branch of the Ministry to deal with their industrial training and subsequent absorption into industry. The post of Pensions Minister, in view of the state of the public mind at that time—which was ready to criticise ruthlessly any seeming case of unjust administration—was far from being a sinecure, and at one period during Mr. Hodge's term of office the Ministry was handling new pensions cases at the rate of nearly twenty thousand a week.

When the controversy arose in the Labour Party as to whether participation in the Coalition Government should be continued, he was one of those who vigorously opposed withdrawal. In his defence of this attitude he was not so much concerned as to whether the Party had made a mistake in ever entering the Coalition, but he believed that if they withdrew so long as the War was being waged, their action would strike at the heart of the allies and be a source of great encouragement to our enemies.

Apart from his Parliamentary duties, his enthusiasm for developing the political expression of Labour's aims is exemplified by the active part he took in the formation of the Labour Party, then the Labour Representation Committee, at the beginning of the century. On two occasions he was its President, whilst for a long number of years he was a member of the National Executive, and a Trustee for the Parliamentary Fund. In the many efforts which had for their object the establishment of a Labour daily newspaper he was also to the fore, and on the birth of the *Daily Citizen* he was one of its original directors.

His interest and experience in international affairs, and in the temperance and religious movements, has made him a broadminded man of tolerant views, whilst his ability as a Trade-Union negotiator and Parliamentarian, and his frankness, geniality, and thorough trustworthiness, have earned him a wide measure of national esteem.

MR. BEN TILLET, M.P.

THE DOCKERS' LEADER

MANY people, both within and without the ranks of organised Labour, were not too pleasantly surprised when they failed to find the name of Ben Tillett among the list of Ministers composing the Cabinet formed by the first Labour Government in this country early in 1924. Disappointment seemed reasonable, taking into account the personal qualifications of its object and his prestige as one of the most representative figures in British Trade Unionism. Mr. Tillett and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald share the distinction of being the only Labour members in the 1924 Parliament who were foundation members of the Labour Party—in the sense that they were members of the Executive Committee of the old Labour Representation Committee, the forerunner of the Labour Party.

Few living men have contributed more to the structural development of the Trade-Union Movement than this sturdy champion of his class, who combines the fervour of an apostle with the astuteness of a trained politician. His pursuit of his ideals is faithful and unrelenting, but never unwary: probably no leader has ever exacted less from his followers in the prosecution of those forlorn hopes on which the mere idealist is apt to waste so much time and energy.

Ben Tillett was born at Bristol on the 12th of September sixty years ago, and was christened Benjamin; it is doubtful whether the formal use of his name survived the christening ceremony. His childhood was passed under such conditions as only the victims of the worst effects of our economic system can understand: at the age of 8, after a few days' schooling, he went out into the world to earn his living in a coal-mine. At the age of 10 he found employment with a circus, and was placed in charge of two performing animals, a Shetland pony and a Scotch terrier. Circus life, however, soon ceased to attract a lad of a thoroughly adventurous disposition, and

two years later young Ben became ship's boy on a fishing smack. Thence he graduated into the Navy, to be invalided out after a short term of service. His predilection for a seafaring life remained, however, and he is next heard of as a seaman in the mercantile marine.

No class of workers have ever been more unscrupulously exploited than those employed about the business of the high seas, and the lot of the marine workers of forty years ago was rendered apparently hopeless by their lack of any organisation which could safely be trusted even to state their grievances. Discontent found expression in small isolated movements of insurrection which by the application of antiquated statutes were made to fall within the predicament of the penal code, and, as mutinies, were repressed in the interests of law and order.

Ben Tillett played a great part in changing all that. In 1887 he founded the Sea Operatives and General Labourers' Union, with three hundred members, who made him their secretary. It was a small but portentous beginning. In two years the movement had grown sufficiently strong to take the forward step which involved it in the docker's strike of 1889—an epic contest in which John Burns and Tom Mann enlisted on the side of the workers and which opened a new chapter in Trade-Union history. This struggle gave both friends and foes a taste of the quality of one who was to become famous as one of the staunchest and ablest strike-leaders of his time. His union—which had meanwhile been reorganised on a more comprehensive basis as the Dock, Wharf, Riverside, and General Workers' Union—not merely survived an event to which many had expected it would succumb, but largely increased the prestige which it had acquired during two years of able administration, and was henceforth to be reckoned one of the most formidable of the forces aligned on the side of the organised working-class.

There followed a period of intensive development. Mr. Tillett proved one of the most effective missionaries the Trade-Union Movement had ever known, with a platform style which owed a good deal to his experiences as a preacher from Congregational pulpits, though his native gift of eloquence could not have borne clerical trammels.

From the first he was a firm believer in the alliance of Trade Unionism with the most progressive of political forces, and his intervention in municipal affairs was so successful

that in 1892 he achieved aldermanic dignity, an event celebrated by *Punch* in verses which, to be both fair and candid, were neither funny nor vulgar. The road to Parliamentary honours proved longer and more toilsome. The newly made alderman failed to capture West Bradford in 1892, and was equally unsuccessful in a renewed attack on the same constituency in 1895. Eleven years later he contested Eccles with no better fortune, the tale of defeat concluding with his failure to capture Swansea Town in 1910. It was not until he won a by-election at North Salford, in 1917, that this zealous champion of the masses secured the right to plead their cause in the council of the nation. He held this seat against vigorous attacks in the General Elections of 1918, 1922, and 1923.

Political ambition, which, however selfless, was none the less keen, did not interrupt the work of organisation, a task in which he has always taken a peculiar delight. He was one of the pioneers in the formation of the General Federation of Trade Unions, which, notwithstanding the superior rights and powers of the Trades Union Congress, did enjoy some prestige as a quasi-representative body.

In 1911 the Dockers' Union—to use a convenient abbreviation of its more regular title—became involved in the great London transport strike of that year. There were circumstances which invested this struggle with especial significance and hardened the temper with which it was conducted on both sides. The protagonist of the employers was Lord Devonport, who was supposed to owe his elevation to the peerage to a desire on the part of the Liberal Government to frighten the aristocracy. Lord Devonport entirely failed to understand the significance of the new spirit which in 1911—an epochal year—manifested itself throughout the ranks of every section of the workers. The outstanding figure of the strikers, however, was the Dockers' Secretary. His personality was vividly outlined for the public at a memorable meeting of strikers held on Tower Hill, when at the conclusion of a scorching indictment of the employers' policy he bade his audience kneel, and offered up a solemn prayer to God to strike Lord Devonport dead.

One solace to him during this time of bitterness and disillusion was the rapid progress among the British workers of the idea of Internationalism. Mr. Tillet was one of the first of Trade-Union Socialists to whom Internationalism meant

something more than an agreeable topic for debate. Amid his many preoccupations he found time to work hard towards the realisation of "an ideal greater human brotherhood"—as he himself states his idea—and his name to-day stands high in the list of those familiar to organised labour in every part of the world.

A dock strike at Hamburg in 1912 enticed him into a crusade which focused upon him the attention of all Europe. He went to Hamburg in defiance of the veiled menaces of the German authorities, and although arrested and deported before he had time to fulfil his engagements to the German dockers, the encouragement given to the latter in their struggle against an oppressively militarised plutocracy was none the less real and helpful.

It was to be expected that the outbreak of war in 1914 should shock him profoundly; though it failed ultimately to undermine his faith in the international method, it did undoubtedly induce him to accept the notion that, after all, some capitalist governments might be worse than others. He found no difficulty in condemning the excesses of German militarism. With all this he remained loyal to the workers. Throughout the struggle he insisted that the large sacrifices made by the workers should be met by an equal willingness to submit to the burdens of the War by the employers. It was certainly no fault of his—or of any other leader of organised labour—that the bargain was sometimes extremely ill-kept. When, early in 1915, a mean newspaper campaign was opened against the dockers, Ben Tillett leaped to the defence with a vigour that his adversaries found decidedly disconcerting. The patriotism of the dockers was thenceforth immune from attack.

No party suffered less constitutionally from the effects of war fever than Labour, and 1918 found them ready with a programme of reconstruction and reform which gradually won more and more on the toiling masses of the country. Efforts were also made at that time to re-establish the international relations of the organised workers which had been broken by the War. The Transport workers, as might have been expected from their history, took a leading part in these developments, and to Ben Tillett fell, in 1921, the thoroughly congenial appointment in his organisation of International Secretary.

In 1923 far-reaching moves towards the amalgamation

into one organisation of the various sections of Transport workers reached their culmination, and Ben Tillett signed his 32nd and last annual report, his 100,000 stalwarts going to swell the ranks of the newly formed Transport and General Workers' Union. This powerful body, equal in industrial and political influence to any similar organisation in the kingdom, chose Mr. Tillett to supervise its political and international activities, and has in more than one emergency been glad to avail itself of his prestige in meeting the domestic problems that have inevitably arisen since it came into existence.

Mr. Tillett, like all born controversialists, loves a pen equally with a platform. His annual reports to his Union are real narratives, while his *History of the Dockers' Strike of 1911* has epic qualities apt to the struggle it describes. Ben sent two copies of this production to the Home Secretary of the time for presentation to the King: they were returned by the functionary (it was only Winston Churchill) with the remark that they wouldn't do at all as they were of a controversial nature.

Ben Tillett to-day is a veteran of Labour: what is more significant, however, to the student of that Movement and the personalities with which its history is concerned is the fact that he is still a pioneer. Much has been heard of him in the past. There is still—no one doubts it—to be much to hear.

THE LATE FRED BRAMLEY

SECRETARY OF THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS

THE Secretaryship of the Trades Union Congress is one of the most important and influential positions which the organised Working-class Movement can bestow upon one of its members. Its holder is charged with administrative responsibilities and possesses opportunities of leadership that are at least as great as those of any political office in the Labour Movement. Among the half-dozen men who have held the position its recent occupant, Mr. Fred Bramley, was certainly the man whom destiny seemed to have chosen to magnify the office. Mr. Bramley had a very keen sense of the significance of the work he had been called upon to undertake, and under his guidance the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, like the Congress itself, began to exercise much greater control over the Trade-Union Movement than it had done in the past. Trade Unionism has suffered from the lack of a strong central authority to co-ordinate and unify the activities of the individual Unions. In his short tenure of office, Mr. Bramley, as Assistant Secretary, and later as Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, worked hard to provide the Unions with a central executive organ—the General Council of the Congress—possessed of wider powers and exercising a greater influence than the Unions would have dreamed, a generation ago, of allowing it to assume. By his untimely death, at the age of 51, the British working class movement lost one of its ablest and most devoted leaders. He died, quietly but with tragic suddenness, at Amsterdam, on October 9th, 1925, following a serious breakdown of health which was unquestionably caused by overwork and extreme devotion to his duties as Secretary of the Congress.

Mr. Bramley entered upon his duties as Secretary of the Trades Union Congress after his formal election as successor to Mr. C. W. Bowerman, M.P., at the Plymouth Congress in 1923. The policy he formulated and pursued made his tenure

of office more notable than that of any of his predecessors. Leaving out of the reckoning George Potter, who held the office of Secretary for a very short term when the Congress was still a rival to the Junta, there have been eight holders of the office: George Howell, first of the dynasty, ruled for six years, from 1869 to 1875, and was succeeded by Henry Broadhurst, who held office for nine years before resigning to become Under-Secretary for the Home Office in the Gladstone Government, but returned to the Secretaryship in 1886 and did not finally resign until 1889: in the interval of Broadhurst's secretaryship George Shipton was appointed to the post. Following Broadhurst came Charles Fenwick, who had a tenure of only four years, 1890 to 1894; his successor, Sam Woods, reigned for ten years, 1895 to 1904, and was succeeded by W. C. Steadman, who continued in office for five years, 1905 to 1911, when Mr. C. W. Bowerman was elected to the position. Under these able and experienced men the Congress became a powerful and influential body which affected profoundly the development of the Trade-Union Movement. But it had never been what Mr. Bramley strove to make it—the organ of common purpose and conscious will in Trade Unionism as a whole.

Mr. Bramley was born at Poole, near Otley, in the Wharfedale Valley, in 1874. He spent his early life in Bradford, where he learned his trade as a cabinet-maker and became a member of the local trades council executive. Before he was twenty years old he had established a reputation for clear thinking and plain speaking on Labour and Socialist platforms and developed these gifts in years of open-air work as one of the *Clarion* vanners, in the days when Socialist propaganda was carried on with something of the zeal and enthusiasm of a new religion. In 1912 he succeeded Mr. (now Sir James) O'Grady as organising secretary of the Furnishing Trades Association. As a delegate of his Union he was a prominent figure at the annual Trades Union Congresses, and in 1915 he was elected to a seat on its governing body, then known as the Parliamentary Committee. It was as a natural sequel to his work as a Trade Union leader that he was chosen in 1920 as Assistant Secretary of Congress. In that position he rendered valuable help to Mr. Bowerman, and introduced many important changes in the office arrangements at Congress headquarters. His appointment as Mr. Bowerman's successor was entirely in the natural order of things. Mr. Bramley,

above all else, worked for Trade Union unity and efficiency in administrative work. On his initiative, steps were taken at the Trade Union headquarters to enlarge the staff and to establish departments for statistical and other research work, publicity, and organisation. He took an active part in framing the scheme for joint working between the Congress and the Labour Party, and helped materially to reorganise the old Parliamentary Committee of the Congress. Under its new name of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress this body is twice as large and infinitely more efficient to-day largely because of the vision, energy, and initiative Mr. Bramley displayed.

Courage, independence of mind, and confidence in his own judgment were conspicuous qualities in Mr. Bramley's make-up. He was a hard worker, and took an interest in small details of administration as well as the large issues of policy with which he was concerned as Secretary of Congress. His main effort was to make the headquarters of the Trade-Union Movement an effective and well-organised Centre capable of dealing with the multifarious questions of policy and organisation that are continually emerging and are becoming more complex as the Trade Unions grow in power and numbers. For nearly half its lifetime Congress represented a number of relatively small societies, only a few of which had a membership in excess of 50,000; to-day there are great Unions, comparatively recent in their origin, with memberships approximating to the million mark. The problems connected with the activities of these enormous organised masses, and their interaction upon one another, are not simple or easy to understand: they call for trained minds and wide expert knowledge to handle them as they require to be handled. Even in structure and organisation the Trade Unions are still in the making, and their linking up by means of amalgamation and federation is a process that calls for wisdom, patience, and skill in the leaders. Trade Union leadership, in short, is a specialist's job, and Mr. Bramley treated it as such. When he became Secretary of the Trades Union Congress he resigned political ambitions, though he was a Labour candidate for Reading and in the House of Commons would undoubtedly have made a mark. But neither the Trade-Union Movement nor Mr. Bramley himself lost anything by his decision to devote himself wholly to the tasks of industrial leadership. He made a permanent change in methods and tendencies.

MR. ERNEST BEVIN

DEVON has ever been famous as the birthplace of big men, and in Mr. Ernest Bevin—at present the General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, and formerly the National Organiser of the Dockers' Union—it can claim a son who is no exception to the rule, either from the physical or intellectual standpoint.

It is said that every crisis produces its man, and it was the post-war clamour of the dockers for better conditions of employment that produced Mr. Bevin and placed him in the front rank of Trade-Union leaders. His remarkably able handling of their case before the Shaw Commission, which was set up in 1920 to consider the dispute then pending, was, without doubt, the most outstanding event of the year, and to-day he is responsible for the organisation and leadership of over 300,000 men.

Not always has it been his lot, to wield so vast a power or to figure so prominently in the conduct of the industrial affairs of the nation. Indeed, he might easily have been condemned for life to remain in the ranks of the submerged tenth, whence, as a young man, he was forced by the cruelty of economic conditions. But his forceful and determined nature, coupled with his extraordinary abilities, impelled him to stride from out the squalor of his environment, and to lead his fellow-men in the direction of better things, instead of being a burden upon them and the community at large.

Born in 1880, he is still a young man of forty-five years, and if his future progress is to be measured by the past, there can hardly be imposed a limit to the lengths that his ambition and ability may carry him. It was as a boy on a farm in his native Devonshire that he began to earn his living. Then he migrated to Bristol, where he found employment in a restaurant, and later he became the driver of a horse-drawn delivery van in the same city. Whilst working in this capacity he first made the acquaintance of the Trade Union and

Labour Movement, and his consciousness of its necessity to the workers was accentuated both by the conditions of his employment, and by the long periods that he had to endure without any work at all. He soon saw that organisation and agitation on the part of the workless were essential if they were to secure an improvement in their condition, and thus he obtained his initial experience as a leader of men by accepting the secretaryship of the West of England Unemployed Movement. "I would never starve if labour is refused me," he said once when speaking of his impoverishment in those days. "Neither God nor nature demands it of us, and if man demands it, then I will violate the social laws he has made."

The one great change that influenced his destiny was when he permanently left the delivery van to take up office as a local official of the Dockers' Union. Thus he was enabled to devote the whole of his time and attention to industrial affairs, and in 1922, on the amalgamation of the thirteen unions connected with the transportation industries (other than the railways) to form the Transport and General Workers' Union he was chosen as the General Secretary of this organisation.

In the meantime he had made his reputation by the masterly manner in which he handled the dockers' case before the Shaw Inquiry in 1920. Pitted against him, as the spokesman for the employers, was one of the most experienced King's Counsel at the Bar, but Mr. Bevin's skill in presenting his arguments, his marvellous marshalling of figures, and the eloquence and clarity of his speeches, not only earned him the popularly-accorded title of the Dockers' K.C., but drew forth well-deserved tributes both from his opponent and from the President of the Court.

The inquiry arose out of the demand of the dockers for a minimum wage of 16s. a day, together with the consideration of the question of decasualisation. The Court held twenty sittings at the Royal Courts of Justice, the first three days being occupied by Mr. Bevin's opening statement on behalf of the men. He held the assembly spellbound with his dramatic revelations of the conditions under which the dockers were forced to live and work, and so electrified did the atmosphere of the Court become towards the close of his appeal that as he resumed his seat the occupants of the public gallery rose in a body in prolonged applause. Such a procedure, of

course, was hardly in keeping with the austere traditions and surroundings of the Court, but in warning the public that applause could not be permitted, the chairman (Lord Shaw) said that he quite appreciated the demonstration, and was not surprised by it. "I desire, on behalf of the Court," he added, "to thank you, Mr. Bevin, for the care and cogency with which you have presented the case for the workmen. The Court appreciates very much the illuminating statement you have made."

Sir Lynden Macassey, K.C., the advocate for the employers, said that he wished also to express his professional admiration for the clearness and cogency with which Mr. Bevin had put forward his case. "Mr. Bevin's conduct of it," he went on, "has not disappointed the expectations of many of his friends, and I think they may predict for him a very great future in the cause he has so much at heart."

That prophecy proved to be as true during the succeeding stages of the inquiry as it has since been in the wider sphere of the Labour Movement, for he carried practically every point in his argument. When the employers presented what they termed a standard budget for a working-class home, his ingenuity shattered the whole case at one fell swoop, for when the Court reassembled on the following morning, they found displayed on the table in the well of the Court ten plates, five of which contained minute portions of boiled potatoes and cabbage, the other five containing small pieces of cheese. Explaining the exhibits, Mr. Bevin said that the employers had allowed a shilling a week for vegetables. "I have divided it into a daily ration for five people," he said, "and each of these plates contains one of these rations." Needless to say, the employers' contention was laughed out of court.

His resourcefulness again stood him in equally good stead at another stage of the inquiry, when the employers suggested that the cost of living during recent years had not increased to the extent that Mr. Bevin had claimed. Promptly he produced the detailed scale of a soldier's ration compared for the years 1905 and 1920, thus proving that the cost of the items over that period had increased by nearly 300 per cent. As to the employers' ability to pay, he showed that the dockers' demand would only necessitate an increase of $\frac{1}{2}d.$ per cwt. on freights.

As to the measure of success that attended his efforts

generally at the Inquiry, the only fact that needs to be stated is that the dockers were granted the 16s. minimum wage which they demanded, and that their requests for an investigation of decasualisation and registration were also conceded.

When the news of the finding became known, Mr. Bevin naturally was lionised by his men throughout all parts of the country. It was one of the greatest victories for organised labour experienced during the post-war years, and all the more creditable because it was won in a battle of wits and not in a struggle with brute force as the sole arbiter.

Outside the boundary of his activities in the transportation industry, he has risen to almost equal prominence in the general counsels of the movement. He was one of the mediators whose untiring efforts brought about the settlement of the railway strike in 1919; and when the Labour Movement protested in 1920 against the Coalition Government's policy of sending munitions to Poland, he was the spokesman who headed the deputation; whilst at the Trades Union Congress his eloquence and clear thinking mark out his every utterance for respect and close attention.

He made an attempt to enter Parliament in 1918, as the Labour candidate for Central Bristol, but though he polled over 7,000 votes, his opponent—Sir T. Inskip—held an immeasurable advantage as the recipient of the Coalition "ticket."

Since this incursion into the political sphere, he has devoted himself more particularly to industrial matters, with a measure of success that has been surpassed by very few.

MR. GEORGE LANSBURY, M.P.

THE JOHN BULL OF POPLAR

BY C. LANGDON EVERARD

("Gadfly," of the *Daily Herald*)

THE fifty-sixth annual parliament of the organised workers of Britain was in session at Hull, that city of ships and statues. The chairman called upon the next speaker. One of the delegates seated on the platform rose to his feet. As he did so, to borrow an old stage expression, "the house rose at him."

Tall as a guardsman and broad-shouldered, with a head which, though silvered by sixty years of "hard graft," was held erect as that of any athlete, blue-eyed and square-jawed, his appearance, in his double-breasted jacket of blue serge, suggested the John Bull of legend. The illusion was heightened, no doubt, by his fast-greying side-whiskers. But a John Bull with a difference. A John Bull without a paunch and without a whip. Subtle distinctions, when you come to think about it.

The delegates were on their feet cheering loudly, almost riotously, one might say. Then from a thousand throats arose the strains of that characteristically English pæan,

"For—he's a jolly good fellow !
He's a jolly good fellow !
For he's a jolly good fellow !
And so say all of us !"

"Mr. Chairman and fellow-delegates," said the tall man, as the cheering died down, "on behalf of the *Daily Herald* and its staff——" George Lansbury, of course—the "G. L." whose portrait you may come upon in a thousand humble homes up and down the land ; the "stormy petrel" of the Labour Movement to some, the spiritual successor of James Keir Hardie to others.

The son of a Welsh mother and a Warwickshire father, George Lansbury was born in the little market town of Hales-

worth, in the county of Suffolk, in 1859, on the 21st of February, to be exact. His father was engaged at the time as a sub-contractor on the railway line then under construction between Ipswich and Great Yarmouth.

At the age of 7 young George was transplanted from the fertile lands of East Anglia to the less pastoral territory of East London, his parents migrating to Whitechapel with their offspring in the year of our Deliverance, 1866. Those who are accustomed to trace the hand of Providence—which seems to be a trifle heavy at times!—in such matters, may perceive some inner significance in this. At the time, however, the future “Member for the East End” seems to have held no particular views concerning the change in his environment.

Compulsory education had not yet arrived to give the young of the lower orders ideas above their station. That particular battle was not won until four years later. But there were in existence numerous schools run under the auspices of the Established Church, and it was there (first at St. James the Less, in Bethnal Green, and later at St. Mary’s, Whitechapel) that the future M.P. for Bow and Bromley wrestled with the three Rs and such other elements of education as he could lay hold upon.

Incidentally, it was at St. Mary’s (now the Davenant) school that he first essayed the rôle of an agitator. The boys thought that they were entitled to a play-hour, “same as the girls,” and young Lansbury, being a boy, thought so too. To that end he set about organising a “strike,” but apparently the mere threat of direct action was sufficient in this instance. The boon was granted forthwith.

Lansbury left school at 12, but after a year’s breathing space was sent back again to be “finished off.” He seems to have borne that philosophically, and his fourteenth year found him in his first job as an office boy. It is permissible to believe that he was a good office boy, though I incline to the general opinion that good office boys are about as common as good sergeant-majors.

However that may be, Lansbury soon parted company with his high stool and went out travelling for a local coal merchant. Later he became a checker on the railway, and subsequently worked as his own master unloading coals on the Great Eastern Railway. After this he put in a spell managing a working-man’s restaurant.

Young Lansbury, who combined an active mind with a tireless body, seems to have developed a keen interest in working-class problems from the very start. Living in Whitechapel, and labouring side by side with his neighbours, he eagerly imbibed the Radicalism of his day. Ruskin, Kingsley, and Frederick Maurice made a deep impression on his naturally inquiring mind, with the result that G. L. threw himself early into the struggle for decent conditions for the under-dog.

He was, as a matter of fact, one of the first to join the old Gas Workers' and General Labourers' Union, of which he is still a member and trustee. This union, now merged into that of the General Workers, was the first serious attempt to organise the so-called "unskilled" labourer (the "dross" with which the skilled Trade Unionist had no dealings) and Lansbury's adhesion thereto was characteristic of one who was subsequently to become identified in the public eye with the fortunes, and the misfortunes, of the bottom dog of our industrial system.

In the early eighties, emigration to the Colonies was being boosted, as now, as an antidote to distress at home. Lansbury decided to try his luck in Australia, where, English labourers were persuaded, milk and honey were flowing in "Bonza" fashion. Accompanied by his wife (he had married, in his twenty-first year, the daughter of a Bow timber merchant) and his three children, he set sail from Liverpool bound for Queensland.

Nowadays the journey to Brisbane takes four weeks, and the emigrant is assured of a comfortable voyage. In the eighties, however, a trip to the Antipodes was anything but a joy-ride for the intending settler. To be shipped thither in a convict hulk was worse, no doubt, but at least the convict had the satisfaction of knowing that he was being transported free, whereas the unfortunate emigrant not only got a rough passage, but was charged for it. In February, 1884, the *Duke of Devonshire* steamed into Brisbane harbour, after eight weary weeks at sea, and the travellers looked upon the Promised Land. Like Queen Victoria, they were not amused. Australia has made wonderful strides during the last decade or two, but, in the eighties, snags were as plentiful as rabbits. The prickly pear had not yet arrived, but otherwise everything in the garden was far from being lovely.

Queensland, says G. L., was "scarcely the El Dorado painted by the enthusiastic emigration agents, who, incident-

ally, received a hefty commission on the fares of those whom their glowing—but not too truthful—statements induced to undertake the 16,000 miles journey.”

A bleak reception awaited the Lansburys. On the very first day they tumbled into an unemployed demonstration. “The same old speeches, the same old arguments, we’ve listened to on Mile End Waste,” was the thought that struck both. They found that food was dear, housing accommodation wretched, and sanitation practically non-existent. And, in order to make them feel thoroughly at home in the jolly old Colonies, there was no work to be had.

“Often,” wrote Lansbury, years afterwards, “when I hear comfortable folk, who have never known real hardships in their lives, speak disparagingly of the unemployed, and of their failure to perform tasks for which they are physically unfitted, I remember that, when I was in the very prime of life, with a superabundance of health and energy, I was not wanted—‘No man hired me.’”

After a spell of stone-breaking, he got a job in a slaughterhouse. Neither would, I suppose, come under the heading of “light occupations,” and G. L. was doubtless grateful for his physique. In connection with the latter job, he is fond of telling a story against himself.

He discovered that he would be expected to work seven days a week, owing to the climate, which necessitated that all meat should be freshly killed. Lansbury was not only a good Anglican, but, at this time, a dyed-in-the-wool Sabbatarian. He did not mind how many hours he put in on a week-day, but he objected to doing a stroke on Sunday.

He told the Irish manager as much, and when that worthy man had recovered from his astonishment and had endeavoured in vain to persuade him, G. L. was paid off. “I left on the Saturday, but, owing to sleeping in a draught, the same night I caught a frightful cold in a bad tooth. On the Sunday morning, it was ‘giving me jip’ to such an extent that I sought out a dentist. I induced him, despite my principles, to labour on a Sunday and extract that tooth. So much for consistency!”

It took him ten weeks to fix up with a farmer and not as many days to regret it. Having packed their few belongings, the Lansburys, with their three youngsters, left Brisbane and travelled one hundred miles up-country, by uneasy stages, into the back blocks. They call their farmers “cockies”

Down Under, I believe; but it doesn't look as though this particular specimen had a lot to be "cocky" about. The "home" provided for the new "hand" and his family, as per contract, turned out to be a ramshackle hut, with gaping sides and a roof which leaked in umpteen different places. Scarcely an ideal home for three small children, for a start! Presumably, the kind-hearted boss consoled himself with the thought that they weren't his kids, anyway.

If there wasn't an overplus of comfort, however, there was a pretty fair helping of good, nourishing work. With the latter, at any rate, the "cocky" seems to have been liberal almost to a fault. From sunrise to sundown the "new chum" was kept on the go. He was expected to milk between 40 and 50 cows a day for a start. And lest time should hang heavy on his hands, he passed the rest of the gladsome hours in ploughing, harrowing, carting, grinding mangold-wurzels, cutting chaff, sawing wood, and so forth. In his spare time he probably meditated on the horrid career of the Idle Apprentices; but of this I am not sure.

After some months of these rural sports and pastimes, he decided to take stock. Whereupon he made the joyous discovery that, taking into consideration money due for eggs, milk, and the other necessities of life purchased, perforce, from the benevolent farmer, he was actually in that worthy man's debt.

Lansbury makes a practice (or did, until Fleet Street cured him of it) of refraining from swearing, so one is left to guess at his thoughts on that auspicious occasion. The "new chum" appears to have made it clear, anyway, in no uncertain fashion, that he was chucking up the job. The outraged "cocky" threatened him with imprisonment for breach of contract (he had signed on for three years), but Lansbury, telling him to get on with it, packed up and returned, with wife and offspring, to Brisbane, twenty pounds out of pocket.

There he managed to get a job delivering parcels for a local tradesman. That doesn't seem to have been as "cushy" as it sounds, either, seeing that the young man was pushing his barrow round in all weathers from early morning until midnight or thereabouts. Not that he was afraid of work. Which was just as well, in the circumstances, perhaps. We are told that the Colonies want men and I should be the last to dispute it. But in the eighties they seem to have wanted robots.

After three months of this sort of thing, the young couple

took counsel together in the light of their somewhat dearly acquired experience. The upshot of it was that they returned to England, home, and duty, "not merely to fight our own battle," as G. L. puts it, "but to help in the only fight that really mattered—the fight against poverty."

Arrived back in the Old Country, the Lansburys settled down in Bow, George having accepted his father-in-law's invitation to take up a partnership in his timber business. He threw himself into local politics with renewed vigour, but by this time he had come to doubt the efficacy of Liberalism, not to mention the honesty of its exponents. The latter, like their Tory friends, were prepared, it seemed, to do anything for the poor except (as Tolstoy once said) get off their backs. "Social reform" was, at best, a sort of snail's progress in the right direction. Lansbury, on the other hand, was—and still is—a young man in a hurry.

Socialism at that time was just beginning to make itself heard. William Morris and H. M. Hyndman, Annie Besant and Edward Carpenter, Harry Quelch and Cunningham Grahame, to mention but a few of the pioneers, were proclaiming the new gospel from the soap box at the street corners. If the common people didn't hear them with any marked gladness—the idea took a few years to sink in, as a matter of fact—George Lansbury certainly did.

What made the new creed more acceptable to him was the fact that it squared with his own religious ideals, which were nearer to those of the primitive Christians than those of the average Churchman of his own day. His views were strengthened, moreover, by certain earnest priests who had the courage to throw in their lot with the advance guard of the Red army. And in those days it needed courage.

Down there in Poplar, with its mean streets, its grim factories, and its dismal slums—one of those triumphs of modern industrialism to which your successful capitalist invariably omits to draw attention in his after-dinner orations—George Lansbury faced up the problem of his particular part in Poverty. As an earnest Radical (he was a Liberal agent at that time) he found himself gradually driven to the conclusion that, so far as dealing seriously with the question was concerned, his own party were about on a par with their Conservative opponents.

Despite his loud protestations of sympathy with the down-trodden, when the only alternative was a lowering of his precious dividends the Liberal employer, like his Tory brother,

was content to go on treading them down. His charity began abroad—and stayed there. The sufferings of the oppressed Armenians touched his manly heart, but the grievances of his employees threatened his purse. Which was not to be borne!

Lansbury, meditating upon these things, came to the conclusion that, so far as the workers of Poplar or anywhere else were concerned, they didn't stand a cat-in-a-well's chance of getting a square deal from the Liberals. The upshot of it all was that he decided to throw in his lot with the Socialists and joined, in 1892, the Social Democratic Federation.

In the same year he secured a seat on the local Board of Guardians, which he has held ever since. He immediately proceeded to make things sultry for certain enterprising people whose zeal for the public welfare of the borough had turned out, in practice, to be a zeal for their own private purses. G. L. wielded the muck-rake with his usual vigour. So much so that the bright lads who had hitherto been waxing fat on municipal jobbery of various sorts decided that the game was no longer worth the scandal and retired hurt. In the year following he was elected a borough councillor, becoming subsequently alderman and afterwards mayor.

By this time Lansbury had shown himself a man to be reckoned with in the Labour and Socialist movements. Writing in *The People's Year Book* for 1896, Joseph Edwards described him as "a splendid speaker, a good election organiser, and a fine, hearty Englishman." He added that Lansbury was "almost as popular with his political enemies as he is with his friends." (In which connection, it is interesting to record the tribute of the *Morning Post* when, nigh on thirty years later, he retired from the editorship of the *Daily Herald*: "Most people who have met Mr. Lansbury in any capacity like him.")

In addition to his municipal activities, always of a strenuous nature, he was called upon to contest Walworth in 1895, as an S.D.F. candidate for Parliament. It was, of course, a forlorn hope—he polled only 207 votes—but his experience stood him in good stead at the following General Election when he fought Bow and Bromley. He failed to win the seat, it is true, but when the peculiar circumstances are taken into consideration, it will be seen that his poll of 2,558 at the first time of asking was significant. For it should be borne in mind that this was the flag-wagging Khaki Election of 1900. And in that joyous period, for a "pro-Boer," as Lansbury notori-

ously was, to appear on a public platform and ask for votes was to ask for a "rough house" also. It was usually delivered.

The South African War, hating to be thought unlike every other war, left behind the usual legacy of unemployment and hardship. (It also left behind some very nice pickings for the shareholders in Rand mines; but they didn't live down Poplar way, so that didn't help overmuch.) A Central Unemployed Body for London was constituted, with a view to alleviating the distress, and on this body Lansbury served for four years.

As a Poplar Guardian, he had been mainly instrumental in founding the first Labour colony, which was designed to save unemployed men from becoming unemployables. This was opened at Landon, in Essex, in 1904. Subsequently he was the moving spirit, with the enthusiastic backing of the late Joseph Fels, in the establishment of the famous Hollesley Bay Colony. The latter was designed to cater for the unemployed of the entire London boroughs; unlike Landon, which was the property of the Poplar authorities. The Hollesley Bay scheme came in for a lot of adverse criticism at the time, but it is interesting to note that both have justified their existence since, as farm colonies.

Lansbury's unrivalled knowledge of the conditions of the London poor led to his appointment to the Royal Commission set up in 1905 to inquire into the working of the Poor Laws. The Commissioners sat for four years, at the end of which two reports were issued. The historic Minority Report (that of the Majority faded into oblivion almost at once) was signed amongst others by Lansbury and subsequently received strong backing from the Labour Movement.

Of Lansbury's other multifarious and untiring activities—his share in the creation of the *Daily Herald* and its vicissitudes, his fight for women's suffrage and consequent imprisonment, his pacifist propaganda during the War, and his subsequent struggle against Churchill's anti-Russian intrigues, his second spell of prison, in company with his Poplar colleagues—of these, as of many other services which he has given so freely to the workers, there is insufficient space to tell here.

Lansbury remains to-day one of the most beloved men in the Labour Movement. The following, from the pen of a London journalist, Mr. S. V. Bracher, helps to reveal the secret: "Of his visit to Russia, and his book thereon, all I

remember is that he taught a lot of children to play ring-a-ring-o'-roses." And again: "To him the Three Estates of the Realm are small objects afloat on the universal stream and the King's Speech is less important than the cry of a hungry child."

There you have the clue to George Lansbury, a man with the frame of a giant, the heart of a lion and—the soul of a child.

MR. FRANK HODGES

INTERNATIONAL MINERS' SECRETARY

FEW men in this country have been more prominently before the public during the last few years than Mr. Frank Hodges, lately Civil Lord of the Admiralty in the Labour Government, and formerly the General Secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain. Born in 1887, he is the youngest man ever recorded to have held either of those posts. He is one of the leading representatives of that younger school of Labour leaders, who, though handicapped by humble birth and arduous early struggles, have risen by sheer intellectual ability to a position of equality with the ablest representatives of other classes possessing all the advantages of wealth and social influence.

His birthplace was the little Gloucestershire village of Woolaston, but at the age of 6 years he removed with his parents to Abertillery, the Monmouth mining centre. Here, in an environment almost wholly industrial in character, the most impressionable years of his life were spent. He received an elementary education at the local Board School, and though he showed promise of development far above the average, the circumstances of home life were such as to preclude his proceeding to a secondary school or university. His father was a confirmed invalid, and at the age of 13 years Frank Hodges had to go down the pit as a collier's boy in order that the family income might be augmented by his meagre earnings.

Nevertheless, the enterprising and militant spirit which is so characteristic of the Frank Hodges of to-day manifested itself at that early age. Despite all the obstacles that confronted him, he contrived to educate himself in the evenings, after his day's work in the pit was done. At the age of 14 he began to interest himself in religious questions, and three years later he had acquired a considerable local reputation as a mission

leader, showing such extraordinary promise that the deacons of the Primitive Methodist Church with which he was connected hoped that he would enter the ministry. His general reading and observation, however, brought him to the conviction that he could best serve his fellows by taking an active interest in the Labour Movement.

His association with the Miners' Federation began at the age of 17, and it was not very long before he was elected as a member of the committee of the Vivian Lodge of the South Wales Miners' Federation. As the nominee of this lodge he was a delegate to the local Trades and Labour Council, and he took office in several local working-class organisations. He also represented his lodge at the district meetings of the Federation, and attended conferences on their behalf in all parts of the country.

In spite of the many interests claiming his time and attention, he did not neglect his studies, with the result that in 1909 he had no difficulty in winning the miners' district scholarship, which entitled him to residential tuition at Ruskin College, Oxford. He had not been at Ruskin for long, however, before his boundless ideals and energy called for a curriculum of training more radical and advanced than that which the Ruskin authorities provided. Thus it came about that he led the revolt which set up the Left Wing Central Labour College, and it was there that he spent the latter part of his two years' college career. A similar period in Paris, perfecting his knowledge of French and studying the machinery of the Continental labour movement, concluded this stage of his academic education.

He then returned to the Vivian Colliery at Abertillery, and resumed his occupation as a miner, coupling with this the tuition of his fellow-workers in economics, French, and history during the evenings, and taking, as was only natural, a prominent part in local Trade-Union affairs. The Joint Committee representing the whole of the workmen employed by the Powells Tillery Colliery Company elected him as its chairman, and his reputation as a skilful negotiator soon became established in the colliery offices of the neighbourhood, whilst by the end of the miners' national strike of 1912 his name was known throughout the whole of the South Wales coal-field.

Shortly after the conclusion of the strike—at the age of 24—he was elected by an overwhelming majority to the posi-

tion of Agent to the Garw district of the South Wales Miners' Federation, and thus became the youngest agent in the miners' movement. So successful was his six years' service in this capacity that his election to the General Secretaryship of the M.F.G.B. in 1918, and to the Secretaryship of the Miners' International in 1919, did not come as a surprise to those who knew him.

His accession to office took place at a memorable moment in the history of the mining industry. The demand for nationalisation had led to the establishment of the Sankey Commission, and he was at once called upon to play a leading rôle as an advocate of the miners' case. His remarkable knowledge of the technical and commercial sides of the industry, combined with a special faculty for handling statistics, stamped him as one of the outstanding members of the Commission, and his cross-examination of those witnesses who were hostile to the miners' point of view was a masterly performance.

Hardly had the task imposed upon him by the Commission been disposed of than he was called upon to figure prominently in the miners' strike of 1920 and the lock-out of 1921. In the latter case he incurred the displeasure of some members of his organisation by addressing a meeting of Liberal and Tory M.P.s in the House of Commons, and though, as a consequence, he offered to resign his post, his executive would not accept the suggestion.

In 1923, still strong in his advocacy of the policy of nationalisation, and enlightened by the history of the two great disputes, he came to the conclusion that the best instrument for effecting the reorganisation of the mining industry was Parliament, and so, at the election in December of that year, he allowed himself to be nominated for the Lichfield Division. In his first contest he was successful, and his inclusion in the Ministry became a matter of course. At the same time, it entailed his resignation from the Secretaryship of the Miners, as under the rules of the M.F.G.B. the holder of the office is not permitted to pursue Parliamentary activities. It was therefore unfortunate that at the succeeding election, after a brief nine months of Parliamentary power, he should lose his seat in the face of the combined opposition that the other parties brought to bear.

But the last has not been heard of him yet. This handsome, cultured, and intelligent young man, still on the youth-

ful side of forty, a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and an effective speaker on the public platform, is destined to wield an important influence in the affairs of the nation and its workers. His appointment to the Secretaryship and the Miners' International in 1925 was the first step in this direction.

MR. C. T. CRAMP

INDUSTRIAL SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF RAILWAYMEN

UNTIL the great railway strike of 1919, there were few people outside the organised Labour Movement who had ever heard of Mr. C. T. Cramp, but as the President of the National Union of Railwaymen during that eventful year he leaped into public prominence with one big bound. On him, along with the General Secretary, Mr. J. H. Thomas, there rested the major part of the responsibility for the capable manner in which that victorious strike was conducted, and during the nine days that it lasted his name became a by-word wherever the topic of the day was being discussed.

Only a few months previously he had been following his daily occupation as a railway guard, to which, in the normal course of events, he would have returned at the end of his Presidential year. The strike, however, opened the eyes of the railwaymen to the desirability of strengthening their organisation. Hitherto the enormous task of defending the interests of nearly half a million men, both on the industrial field and in Parliament, devolved on the one General Secretary, Mr. J. H. Thomas, but the rank and file were too anxious to retain his services to allow him to work himself to the early grave which that dual responsibility would almost inevitably have involved. Accordingly, in order that Mr. Thomas might primarily pursue his labours on their behalf in Parliament, he was appointed their chief official with the title of Political Secretary, whilst a new post, that of Industrial Secretary, was created in order that he might be relieved of the Head Office work and industrial organisation. To this new position, Mr. Cramp—who had been a member of the national executive since 1911—was appointed. He took up his duties on 1st January 1920, and his four years' service so far in that capacity has convinced the railwaymen that they could not have made a better choice. In addition to perfecting the organisation of the N.U.R., he has made strenuous efforts to

promote all-round unity amongst all grades and classes of railway workers, and on more than one occasion has put forward proposals for the amalgamation of the various societies at present catering for railway employees.

He is still on the young side of fifty, having been born in 1876 at Staplehurst, Kent. His godparents at his baptism were evidently intent upon giving him an air of distinction, though the Christian names of Concemore Thomas, which they conferred upon him, were doubtless more of a handicap than an advantage when he became a railway porter at eighteen years of age. His first station was in the south, but he subsequently migrated northwards, and then blossomed out as a guard on the Midland Railway. In appearance he is typical of the smart, well-groomed men who wield the flag and whistle on our express trains. In addition, his love of sport has given him a sound physique and constitution, and his mind has been equally well cultivated by voluminous reading. Moreover, he is blessed with a cheery disposition, a ready wit, and a powerful voice that acquired its resonant tone as the result of long spells of street-corner speaking in the Labour Cause. These combined characteristics make him an admirable chairman for any large gathering, and they well withstood the test that was imposed by the 1924 Conference of the Labour Party, at the Queen's Hall, London, when, as the vice-chairman, he was called upon to preside throughout the greater part of the Conference, owing to the absence of the chairman—who was also the Premier at the time—on Government business. It was at this conference that the resolution was adopted definitely excluding Communists from the party, and as delegates of that persuasion were present in some strength, an injudicious act on the part of the occupant of the chair might have led to uproar. As it was, no assembly was ever conducted in a more pronounced spirit of goodwill, or dispersed with a better feeling prevailing amongst the delegates.

After his year as vice-chairman of the party, he was promoted to the chairmanship, discharging the onerous duties in the same efficient manner as has already earned him praise in every task he has undertaken.

Only once has he sought Parliamentary honours, the occasion being at the Khaki Election of 1918, when the die was weighted heavily against the Labour Party, and in favour of the then Liberal-Tory Coalition. Like many other Labour candidates, he was defeated by the Coalition "Coupon."

candidate, who, in his constituency of West Middlesbrough, chanced to be a Liberal. Nevertheless he polled more than five thousand votes—a good foundation for future contests—but as one of the conditions of his appointment as Industrial Secretary of the N.U.R. was that the whole of his time should be devoted to the Union, he had to bid farewell to the constituency without the satisfaction of making a second appeal to the electors.

He has a wide experience and knowledge of the international ramifications of the Labour Movement, and has been the representative of this country at conferences in many parts of the world. At the end of 1924 he went to the U.S.A. as the fraternal delegate from the British Labour Party to the conference of the American Federation of Labour; in January 1923 he represented the Labour and Socialist Internationals at the Amsterdam Conference which was called to protest against the invasion of the Ruhr, whilst as a member of the Joint International Committee of the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party he has participated in many negotiations and agreements between the working-class movements of the European nations. It was his signature that was appended to the British Labour Movement's protest to Mussolini in June 1924 against the murder of the Italian Socialist Matteotti; he appeared on several deputations to the India Office to urge the improvement of social and political conditions in India; he attended the Congress of the Hungarian Social Democratic Party in Budapest in 1924 as the delegate from British Labour; and also acted as their representative on the executive of the Labour and Socialist International.

In his capacity as a member of the executive of the N.U.R. he was called upon to serve on several of the national committees that were established during the War. These included the Consumers' Council and the Port and Transit Committee, the latter being the body which was charged with controlling the flow of traffic to and from the ports. He was also a member of the Workers' National Committee (which brought pressure very successfully to bear upon the Government from time to time with a view to easing the social conditions of the people), the Committee established by the working-class movement in 1920 to inquire into the cost of living, and the Committee on Adult Education.

Though a practical and level-headed man in the full sense of those terms, his everyday actions are all wedded to high

ideals. Glimpses of these were noticeable in the course of his Presidential Address to the N.U.R. at Edinburgh in 1918, when, in reference to the sacrifices demanded by the War, he said —“ It may be that we shall emerge into a saner and cleaner civilisation, free from the paradox of great wealth on the one hand and abject poverty on the other. It may be that the greatness of this nation shall not hereafter be measured by the extent of its fleets and armies, or the number and magnificence of its stately buildings, but by the general level of the intelligence and well-being of all its people. I pray that a nobler race may arise from the ruins of this great conflict, strong in body, lofty in spirit, high in intelligence, conscious of the dignity of their own lives, respecting only that which is worthy of respect, bowing down to none.” And that is the end to which he has dedicated all his efforts.

THE LATE E. D. MOREL

THE CHAMPION OF OPEN DIPLOMACY

TO have been the recipient of the most glowing praises and gratitude that the Church, the State, and the Press could bestow, and within a few years to have become the object of their most violent and virulent onslaughts, was the remarkable experience of the late Mr. E. D. Morel, M.P., during the last twelve years of his life. Among the makers of the Labour Movement he holds a prominent place by reason of his work for peace, open diplomacy, and international justice.

Few men in the political world suffered more severely than he from 1914 onwards, but none could have borne more heroically the misrepresentation, outlawry, and imprisonment to which he was subjected. True, his views on the prevention of war ran counter to the popular policy, but that provided not the least justification for the campaign of calumny and personal vilification that was pursued against him, especially in view of his previous magnificent record in the cause of humanity. No tactics, however, were too base for his opponents to employ, and even in the obituary notices that announced his death on 13th November, 1924, they adhered to their prejudiced view of his work.

Consolation, nevertheless, may be found by his friends in the fact that history, reviewing the events of to-day from the detached and unimpassioned standpoint of years to come, will undoubtedly accord an important place to his idealistic efforts.

His career was as brilliant as it was sincere, and that the world should have been deprived of his labours, at the early age of 51, was a heavy loss to the forces of reason and justice. He was born in Paris on 10th July, 1873, his father being a French Civil Servant and his mother an Englishwoman, the descendant of an East Anglian family which had been settled in Essex for over three hundred years. At the age of 4 years he was left to the sole care of his mother, his father dying as

the result of a spinal disease contracted through the rigours of military service. He therefore had an hereditary objection to war which can well be understood.

His mother's resolve was that he should be educated in England, and in 1881 he entered Madras House School at Eastbourne, whilst five years later he went to Bedford Modern School. The ill-health of his mother necessitated his school life being brought to an abrupt close before he reached 16 years of age, and shortly afterwards the two of them settled down in England, taking a small house at Blundellsands, and he becoming a clerk in the Liverpool shipping offices of Messrs. Elder Dempster & Co. His ability soon brought him promotion, and before long he was placed in charge of the firm's Antwerp-Congo steamship service. It was in this connection that the stories of the Belgian Congo atrocities came to his ears, and, having already achieved a considerable reputation as a free-lance journalist, and as so outstanding an authority on African affairs that he was later asked to serve on the West African Lands Commission, he relinquished his commercial post and devoted his whole energies to exposing and abolishing the Congo slavery.

In 1903 he founded the *African Mail*, a weekly journal devoted to the development of British West Africa, which during his twelve years' editorship wielded a very great influence and was fearless in its criticism of the abuses that prevailed. His writings attracted the attention of many influential people, and in 1904, with the aid of Sir Charles Dilke, he established the Congo Reform Association. Later he published three books which have become historical in the fight for freedom—*King Leopold's Rule in Africa*, *Red Rubber*, and *Great Britain and the Congo*—and by 1913 the object of his efforts was accomplished and the Congo slavery came to an end.

It was indeed a victory for civilisation, and bishops, statesmen, and newspapers united to pay to him the tribute of appreciation and congratulation that was so well deserved.

No one, at that time, would have pretended to prophecy that within a year or two the very people who were so fulsome in their praise would be hounding him to jail and vilifying him in the most unscrupulous manner. Yet such was to be the case. For some years prior to 1914 he had been consistently denouncing the policy of the Foreign Office in its conclusion of Secret Treaties, especially in so far as our relations with

France were concerned, and pointing out that the inevitable effect of these would be to lead us into a continental war. When, however, both Mr. Asquith, as Prime Minister, and Sir Edward Grey, as Foreign Secretary, on being questioned in the House, emphatically denied that any such alliances existed, he felt that he ought to respect such solemn assurances, and for the time being he moderated his propaganda. Judge of his indignation, therefore, when the country was informed, in August 1914, that we were committed by secret understandings to participation in the conflict which then broke out.

Consequently, he renewed his campaign against the Old Diplomacy that had caused the War, avowed that the sole responsibility did not rest with Germany, and strove his hardest, by urging the introduction of Open Diplomacy, to ensure that a repetition of the catastrophe should not occur. Along with Ramsay MacDonald, Charles Trevelyan, Arthur Ponsonby, and Norman Angell, he formed the Union of Democratic Control. Another stream of books began to pour from his ready pen, *Truth and the War* being the outstanding contribution, whilst *Ten Years of Secret Diplomacy*, a reprinted edition of *Morocco and Diplomacy* which had originally been published in 1913, did much to concentrate public opinion on the manner in which the nation had been deceived.

It was then that his persecution began, and it increased in intensity until 1917, when, for a trivial contravention of the Defence of the Realm Regulations, he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. His only offence was that he had sent a collection of his writings to M. Romain Rolland, the distinguished French author, but that was just the opportunity for which the authorities had been waiting, and despite the vigorous protests that were made in Parliament he had to serve his sentence.

With the end of the War he established *Foreign Affairs*, the enlightening and fearless journal that will always be associated with his name; and in 1919, disgusted with the Liberal Party, with which he had formerly been associated as the candidate for Birkenhead, he joined the Independent Labour Party. Once in the ranks of Labour, he began to make history as effectively as he had previously recorded it, for in November 1922 he defeated Mr. Winston Churchill in the election at Dundee, and took his seat for the first time in the House of Commons. In the elections of 1923 and 1924 he

retained his seat, increasing his poll enormously on the latter occasion, and there is little doubt that a second Labour Government would have seen him installed in a position of high authority. So appreciative was the Labour Government of his services, that many of its members, including the Premier, strongly recommended him for the award of the Nobel Peace Prize, but this recommendation did not materialise.

Then, in the zenith of his second great success, when the people were beginning to realise that he was as accurate in his diagnosis of the affairs of Europe as in those of Africa, he was fatally stricken by a heart attack whilst recuperating in Devonshire from the strain of the Dundee election.

“The White Man with the Straight Eye,” was the description that the Mohammedan chiefs of Nigeria applied to him after the valuable services that he rendered to their country. It is the verdict of humanitarian Britons, too, who had the privilege of being associated with him in public life.

MISS SUSAN LAWRENCE

ALDERMAN OF POPLAR AND EX-M.P.

THERE is one commendatory term in the English tongue which, during the past few years, has been much maligned. Why the word "intellectual" should thus have been attacked it is hard to understand, unless it is because its belittlers find support for their action in the fact that in some cases a high standard of intellectual attainment amongst men and women is accompanied by a lamentable lack of acquaintance with the more ordinary matters of everyday life, and that in consequence their outlook is sometimes detached and unsympathetic.

Miss Arabella Susan Lawrence *is* an intellectual—of that her academic accomplishments leave no scope for doubt—but she is not one of those to whom the modernised perverted and misleading version of the compliment applies. Not only had she a brilliant career at Newnham College, Cambridge—where she took mathematical honours and qualified for B.A.—but she has spent the greater part of her life with and amongst the people of the lowlier quarters of London, working for their welfare, and even, on one occasion, going to prison for them when the safeguarding of their interests demanded that course.

The first Labour woman Member to be announced as elected to Parliament, a member also of the L.C.C., an alderman of that not inconspicuous borough of Poplar, and a Trade-Union organiser on behalf of women workers, her public life has been an active and arduous one indeed.

She comes of a distinguished legal family. Her father, Mr. Nathaniel Tertius Lawrence, was a well-known solicitor of Lincoln's Inn; her grandfather, Sir James Bacon, was in his time Vice-Chancellor of the old Court of Chancery. One uncle was Judge Bacon, the eminent Whitechapel and Marylebone County Court Judge, and another is Mr. Justice Lawrence, one of the Chancery Judges of the present day.

Twenty-four years ago she entered public life. Her college experiences had awakened in her an appreciation of the import-

ance of education from the public point of view, and in 1900 she obtained a seat on the London School Board. That was as a Conservative, and it was under the same colour—though under the slightly different nomenclature of a “Moderate”—that she was elected by Marylebone to the L.C.C. in 1910. She had not long been a member of the latter body, however, ere she came to realise that the proper place for one holding her views was in the Labour Party, and that all the older parties could offer were but palliatives for a state of Society which needed a radical reconstruction. It is said that her experience on an L.C.C. committee dealing with the question of charwomen’s wages was the final factor that influenced her conversion. Consequently, in 1912 she joined the Labour Party, and became associated with the late Miss Mary MacArthur as assistant secretary of the Women’s Trade Union League, and as an organiser for the National Federation of Women Workers. Now that the latter organisation has become the Women’s Section of the National Union of General Workers, Miss Lawrence still continues to serve it, amongst other ways as its representative on five important Trade Boards.

Her early days as a Trade-Union official were not without a certain piquant flavour, especially when the rumour was spread around the East End of London that a lady with a monocle was endeavouring to organise the girl factory workers of that neighbourhood. But within a year she had so endeared herself to those whose lives she had dedicated her own to improving that the people of Poplar in 1913 elected her as one of their representatives to the L.C.C., a post which she holds to this day. She was the first Labour woman on that body, and for a long time her fight was a solitary one, but as in everything else, she held her own, and reinforcements were in due course elected to assist her in her good efforts. The children, and their education, were her especial interests on the County Council, and her fight in 1923 against the forces of reaction, when they commenced to effect “economies” at the expense of the meals of necessitous school children, was as whole-hearted and vigorous as the opposition to such a mean and cowardly course of action required.

She was also elected in Poplar as a member of the Borough Council. Her work on behalf of the unemployed in that impoverished district was untiring, in the face of official obstacles that would have deterred any but the stoutest of heart.

Like her comrades on the Council, she ultimately took a firm stand against the policy which decreed that the poor of Poplar had to maintain their own poor, whilst the wealthier parts of London, with no poor of their own to maintain, were practically immune; and when it became apparent that the only way to secure fair play was for the councillors to refuse to collect the precepts imposed upon Poplar by the major authority she unhesitatingly adopted the course that her conscience dictated and helped to expunge the debt that hung over Poplar by her own 'six weeks' incarceration. The aldermanship to which she was subsequently promoted was an honour that never was better deserved.

Her Parliamentary contests have been as gallantly fought as any in the country. The first in which she engaged was the Camberwell by-election of 1920, when she unsuccessfully pitted herself against Dr. MacNamara. Subsequently she was chosen as the candidate for East Ham North, and at the 1922 election she secured second place in a five-cornered contest. Encouraged by the 6,747 votes polled by their standard-bearer, the local Labour Party carried on a ceaseless campaign of propaganda, and received their reward at the 1923 election in the shape of 2,000 additional conversions, sufficient to win the seat for Miss Lawrence with a majority of 416 over the retiring Conservative Member. In the House of Commons she showed herself not only a forceful speaker and a powerful advocate of the cause of the poor and needy, but a very keen follower and critic of all the proceedings. Her defeat, at the "Red Letter" election of 1924, left Parliament considerably poorer than it had been before.

Nevertheless, until the day of her re-election is at hand, there is the consolation that her services will be available in other spheres, and there are few who can bring to bear a more comprehensive and all-inclusive experience of public questions than she. In addition to the many offices held by her that have been enumerated, she has acted as the Secretary of the Working Women's Legal Advice Bureau, and has been a member of the Committee on Relations between Employers and Employed, the Civil War Workers' Committee, the Employment of Women Committee, the Priority Council on Raw Material, the Labour Party Advisory Committees on Local Government, Trade Policy and Finance, the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organisations, the Special War Arbitration Committee on Women's Wages, the Central

Committee on Women's Employment, and the National Executive of the Labour Party.

Rather dreary reading they constitute in catalogue form, it is true, but a tribute, nevertheless, to the wide sphere of this fearless woman's public activities, and an inspiration to others to emulate her fine example.